NOT FOR FOOLS

ADAM AND EVE
BY
CHARLES SYKES
EXHIBITED AT THE
PARIS SALON
1909

NOT FOR FOOLS

BY

H. DENNIS BRADLEY

WITH DESIGNS BY
RILETTE AND JACQUES D'OR

LONDON
GRANT RICHARDS LTD.
ST MARTIN'S STREET
1920

To

The Inarticulate, Splendid,

Nameless.

The Majority have been warned not to read this book.
Those belonging to the Majority who have been intrigued to do so possess a misguided egoism.

CONTENTS

PART I

PAGE

I. Not for Fools 1

II. Pity the Poor Civilian . . . 5

III. The Civilian looks Ahead 6

IV. The Sinister Unrest 6

V. With Truth comes Peace 7

VI. The Dawn of Sanity 8

VII. Sitting on the Safety Valve . . . 9

VIII. The Reign of Youth 10

IX. How to get Peace by Advertising . . 10

X. The Generation Magnificent . . . 11

PART II

I. Uncensored Impressions 12

II. The Age of Standards 12

III. Paper and Wealth 13

IV. The Barnacles of Trade 13

V. A Nightmare in Mufti 13

VI. The Cost of Curfew 1

VII. A Taxed Luxury 1

VIII. Mrs Hanuman's Indiscretion 1

IX. The Fool's Paradise 1

X. Who Loves the Bureaucrats? . . . 1

CONTENTS

		PAGE
XI.	When Victory comes	144
XII.	Dora the Sterile	148
XIII.	Aren't the Old Men Splendid!	149
XIV.	The Hymns and Errs of Love	151
XV.	Limelight	154
XVI.	Aphorisms Personified	156
XVII.	Dora, the Daughter of Darkness	159
XVIII.	The Last Abdication	161
XIX.	The House of Hypocrites	164
XX.	Ideals and Low Deals	165
XXI.	Going Up	172
XXII.	Jazzing	173
XXIII.	Academy Impressions	175
XXIV.	Man, Woman and Excess	177
XXV.	Aphoristic Laughter	179
XXVI.	A Study in Impertinence	181
XXVII.	Mournful for Monkeys	184
XXVIII.	For Her and Her Alone	186
XXIX.	Lighter than Air	189

PLATES

ADAM AND EVE	*Chas. Sykes*	(*Frontispiece*)
		TO FACE PAGE
THE JUDGMENT OF PARIS	*Rilette*	50
LOVE'S REVOLT	,,	62
WERE WE TO BLAME?	,,	72
LOVE SHORTAGE	,,	88
VICTORY	,,	112
CALIBANISHMENT	,,	122
THE BEAUTIFUL RAG	,,	134
PEACE	*Jacques d'Or*	144
THE PARIS CONFERENCE	,, ,,	152
A JAZZ PEACE	,, ,,	162
MASTERS AND MISTRESSES	,, ,,	170
DEHYMENISED	,, ,,	186

PART I

I

NOT FOR FOOLS

i

Some tragic mathematician has estimated that were all the war books piled one upon another the resulting horrific column would reach from Whitehall to the planet Venus —a new and sinister conjunction of Mars with the mild goddess.

And the worst is not yet.

Another and equally sinister column is in course of erection. The air is full of the stertorous gruntings and heavy breathings of portly admirals and plethoric generals in literary labour. The creakings of their overburdened desks, the scratchings of their hard-driven pens, the muttered " By gad, sirs ! " as the acrid passage is polished, deafen the ears of the imaginative man, and the resulting column of corpulent and expensive volumes of the " How I Alone Was Right " order threatens to dwarf the puny monument of the experts and war correspondents into insignificance.

All of which may be harmless, of course, if only on the principle that any honest labour keeps the labourer out of mischief for the time being.

Still, I foresee one grave danger ; in one serious respect posterity, of which we have heard so much and for whom we have been adjured to sacrifice so much, stands in great risk of being misled and misinstructed.

As things are, I can imagine the bespectacled and highly cultured babe of a future æon pausing in its study of the Great War and, passing a shaking hand across a massive, if throbbing, brow, piping the bewildered comment: "What a curious place the world must have been in these muddled, far-off days! It seems to have been peopled entirely by soldiers, sailors, politicians and war experts! Were there no civilians?"

Yes, prattler, yes, there were, and the little book which I lay in your hand will perhaps help you to realise the struggles and the burdens of the mere civilian of those spacious, if windy, days.

On second thoughts, it is not for the blue-eyed babe of a thousand years hence alone that I write. I imagine that every human being who sits down with pen, ink and paper to perform a book does so with mixed motives. The instruction of posterity is a convenient peg to hang excuses upon, but, on the face of things, there must be another motive of a contemporaneous nature, however ostentatiously and high-mindedly it may be ignored.

In my case I admit it.

With what, to me, is the most praiseworthy altruism, I wish to warn my contemporaries of changes to come, dangers born of an otherwise sterile bureaucracy and a bastard and belated militarism, a militarism in the ranks of which the men who have really fought and suffered do not figure.

ld if that be not sufficient reason, then I have two tional reasons.

rstly, I have received innumerable letters from people read these papers as they appeared, people who are nown to me and who wanted them in some permanent .; and secondly, I am not averse from putting on rd the thoughts and efforts of a civilian who did not , but was retained by authority on what authority ared to be essential work.

uthority early decided that the civilian in war-time a necessary evil, and it was determined to use him, not ly abuse him.

ut, unfortunately, with the best intentions in the world, as impossible to prevent him from thinking. Dora ht do her best and worst, the Press might be muzzled, Truth shiver in her hermetically sealed well, but whatfetters might be piled upon expression, thought was e, even to a civilian.

For nearly three years I kept silence, and during those ars I was in daily contact with men straight from the enches. I knew their views. From them I knew what e war meant. I had masses of correspondence from any parts. It illuminated me.

Month after month for years one after another my st friends came into my little sanctum in Bond Street to my home to say the last good-bye. With a lendid camouflaged cheerfulness they came, but only o often with that extraordinary look in their eyes

which spoke their knowledge that this was indeed the l
time, the last cigar, the last whisky and soda together

Time after time it happened; time after time I kne
and they knew.

Sometimes they would raise the veil from their thought
this happened often with those who never returned. Th
would say, not complainingly, but as fatalists stating fact
"When will this horrible business end? It will never en
There is no end."

Nor was there any end of the war for them. Th
were dead long before the end.

These were the men who "won the war," if any men w
it. For the military victory was won by the dead; a
the dead paid the price.

The war went on.

For close upon three years I kept silent; for close up
three years I watched my friends come and go—never
come again; for close upon three years I studied t
posturings and drum-beatings of the bureaucrats an
the politicians.

Much that was curious had happened on the home fro
in those three years.

For one thing, they had seen the monstrous birth of Dor

Dora, we were assured, was a species of benevolen
guardian angel, whose sole mission was to guard and cheris
us, and to prevent an unscrupulous enemy from acquirin
information of military value. (How amusing was tha
polite fiction, as we look back upon it!)

And how rapidly did Dora grow. Her teeth lengthened into fangs, her nails developed into claws, for ordinary intelligence she adopted a blind and savage unreason, and ere long assumed a censorship of thought.

It was about this time that financial blindness seized upon our rulers.

It occurred to me, as one who is compelled to produce in order that he may live and pay his taxes, that it would be as well, if only for the commercial welfare of the country, if certain business aspects of the war were put before the public.

As I have said, I had listened to many hundreds of opinions from the only men who really mattered in those terrible days—the men who were fighting, suffering and dying to make this country a " home for heroes to live in " —and daily the mass of my correspondence increased.

As for the somewhat sordid commercial aspect, any business man could see that the bureaucratic methods were fast driving the country into bankruptcy, whether the war was lost or won. So I decided to keep silent no longer.

And then I first met Dora.

By this time Dora had grown. Her teeth and claws were fully developed and horribly poisonous, her temper was become utterly vile, and she had long thrown overboard every scruple, every pretence. To say that she was naked and unashamed is to understate things; she gloried in her unsavoury nudity. No wonder that the

Press of the country was nervous of her and kept out of her way.

No wonder Truth hurriedly sought the bottom of her well, and by pulling a cover over the top sought to camouflage her hiding-place.

And not only was Dora to be considered. By now she had a bastard infant, by some evil bureaucrat, who inherited his mother's vices and added to them the fatuous and besotted intolerance of his sire, and was known as the Civilian Censorship. He was a species of watch-dog, and his business was to guard the susceptibilities of the bureaucrats, and this new Cerberus not only inherited his dam's uncertain temper, but barked and bit like his sire.

So it is hardly to be wondered at that the Press walked delicately as they approached his noisome lair and strove anxiously to slip past him without disturbing his slumbers.

Still the war went on. Blood, the blood of the flower of the land, the blood of youth, continued to flow in oceans; money, the money which represented the savings for youth, the future of youth and the future of the land, was flung away in golden showers, and Dora folded her hands across her stomach and croaked complacently, "All is for the best in the best of all possible worlds," and her satellites pasted the land with proclamations enjoining "Silence!"

It had ceased to amuse and I became selfish.

After all, though I had been retained as an "indispensable producer," and, incidentally, as an indispensable tax-payer, I was interested in the future of my country.

Whichever way I looked it was difficult to see any other prospect than financial ruin—*irrespective altogether of the result of the war*.

And not only financial ruin.

The bureaucrats had abrogated, under false pretences, every political safeguard which our forefathers created; by a stroke of the pen Magna Charta became a nullity; freedom of speech had long been dead; freedom of thought had been penalised. Revolution too frequently attends upon repression.

Turn where one might, there lay the slimy trail of the bureaucrat; over finance, commerce, business, war and any future peace. The Press, with the rarest exceptions, had been cowed into silence, and already there were official hints that any criticism would be looked on as a species of *lèse-majesté*.

Nevertheless I determined to lay some of the facts and views which I had gathered before the public, for the spectacle of the wild bureaucratic waste of lives, and money which the spenders frantically adjured the nation to save, had ceased to be funny—in my eyes, at all events.

But I speedily found that there was a difficulty in getting my views published. So great was the terror of Dora and her bastard brat.

"I agree with every line you've written," was the comment of one editor. "I see nothing but utter ruin staring the country in the face, whatever the result of the war may

be, but," and he shrugged his shoulders, "frankly, I daren't print it."

Then I turned to the advertisement columns. One column, two columns, a page, bought and paid for, represented in my eyes so much space which I could use as I chose. Whether I advertised wares or views was a matter that concerned only myself. (By the way, the bureaucrats themselves have not been slow to appreciate the value of the advertisement columns. They have advanced in publicity methods since the days of those fatuous "posters" of the "He's happy. Are you?" breed.)

But so great was the fear of "Dora," so moribund freedom of thought, that the very mild article, "Pity the Poor Civilian," was, at the last moment, "turned down" in a panic by one thoroughly cowed editor.

However, I found another editor daring enough to publish it—in my space and at my expense.

"Daring!" Ye gods and little, little fishes! Read the chapter, "Pity the Poor Civilian," and in the light of events try to find anything particularly "daring" in it. It seems to me to verge on the most obvious matter-of-fact.

The response I received on the publication of this article, an article which was, after all, a mere expression of my personal views on a matter which vitally concerned me as well as the rest of my fellow-countrymen, amazed me. Approving letters from utter strangers ran into hundreds a day, and I determined to continue.

But I must have disturbed some bureaucrat's finer feel-

ings, for I was called before a tribunal, which, after a few remarks on politics, informed me that as my business was an "essential" one I was to remain a civilian until the bureaucrats changed their minds. I ventured to remark that as I had long ago been told that my business was held to be "essential," their decision was no news to me, but an elderly cleric, whose main object in life it seemed to be to send every man before him to a possible death, waggled his head in deprecation of any flippancy at such an awful moment.

The life of the conductor of an "essential" business in war-time has its Gilbertian moments.

ii

From my personal experiences I have no hesitation in saying that under the rule of the bureaucrats the distinguishing features of Armageddon on the home front were intolerance, sheer stupidity and waste—perhaps, above all, waste, waste, waste.

The reasons for intolerance were, of course, obvious.

The moment it had been decided to stifle all criticism it became necessary to get everybody, fit or unfit, essential or non-essential, into uniform of some sort. Utility, economy, production—all were flung upon the altar of Dora and a match applied to them.

All war is waste, but surely never has there been such unbridled waste as there was upon the British home front. Windy politicians bellowed for production, and then,

putting their tongues in their cheeks, proceeded to handicap production out of the race. Self-sufficient and inflated bureaucrats vociferated platitudes about "A Fight for Freedom"—in the largest of capitals—and took effective steps to shackle all individual effort and thought.

Will anyone ever write a book on the many comic and expensive corps devised in the Great War, devised for *no other reason than to place the citizen, body, soul and business, at the tender mercy of the bureaucrat?*

Like most, if not all, who found themselves labelled "essential," I had my comic experiences.

Every four months, after the introduction of Conscription, one was compelled to go through the dreary farce of being called before a tribunal, again to be told the same wearisome platitude that mine was "essential" work, and again to receive the limit of exemption.

But as the war went on even the tribunals felt the strain a little arduous; some of the younger members departed to find "essential" work, and as the old men filled their vacant chairs a general atmosphere of bloodthirstiness became apparent. Elderly clerics in the judgment seat thirsted for blood; it seemed monstrous to the rheumy-eyed "retired" and impotent that any man of the raised "military age" could possibly be engaged in productive work "essential" to the nation. They murmured disrespectfully of the Cabinet and almost began to distrust Dora.

In the early days of the war I had been classified B1. Why, I never knew. Personally, I had always prided my-

self on my fitness. Possibly age had something to do with it. But I resented the assumption of physical unfitness, and when an elderly non-combatant ecclesiastical personage, slaking his thirst for war by sitting on a tribunal, suggested that I should be re-examined before he and his fellows came to their fourth or fifth decision, I point-blank refused. When I declared that I considered myself perfectly fit for general service he and his fellows seemed *outraged at my amazing vanity. There was a wagging of aged heads, a mumbling of aged chops,* an extra wrinkling of over-wrinkled foreheads, references to " instructions " and a regretful decision exempting the " appellant " who had declined to appeal.

(Forgive the personal note—this is merely a record of what happened to many who had been instructed to consider themselves and their businesses " essential " to the prosecution of the war.)

Perhaps in the end the old gentlemen of the tribunals became restive, and it grew necessary to placate them. Their injured feelings, when they found themselves compelled to exempt a declared " essential," probably found expression, and a considerate bureaucracy threw them a sop.

Never shall I forget the gleam of joy in the venerable cleric's eye when, on my umteenth appearance before him, he announced that the tribunals had now been empowered to compel even Government proclaimed " essentials " to abstain from " essential " business in business hours and

join the volunteers. (And he never even smiled as he spoke of "compulsory volunteering"! These are the men who nearly lost the war and may yet make the country bankrupt.)

My volunteer record may not be unamusing. It was, of course, sheer waste, of time, money and labour.

As I happened to possess a car, I was told to join a certain regiment, which shall be nameless, from which, after having wasted many hundreds of gallons of precious petrol—you remember, possibly, the petrol shortage and the restrictions on petrol for productive business purposes?—in doing precisely nothing except drive "volunteer" officers about to see how well nothing was done, I resigned.

I had no right to, of course. It was a voluntary act, and a voluntary act was an unheard-of thing in a volunteer corps of that period. But I never heard anything more about it.

Later on—and I may interpolate that at this particular time the Government demands on my particular business were very great indeed—my aged ecclesiastical friend insisted upon my "joining *something*." There was a revealing vagueness in that "something." If it did nothing else, it expressed his savage desire for uniformity—to clap everyone, whether considered "essential" in another sphere or not, into an expensive uniform. (Do you wonder at a cloth shortage?)

So again, by request, I joined a "motor lot," a proper "motor lot"—most with cars of their very own.

And, of course, having cars of our own, we spent most of our time "forming fours" after business hours and in performing "car evolutions" without cars, each man representing an imaginary car. You see, by this time there was no more petrol to waste on what were only too obvious fooleries.

However, time could be wasted, productive business had ceased to be of value to the country and money could still be flung away on expensive uniforms. The Great Idea was to "get everything and everybody under military rule"—at whatever cost.

We shall continue to feel that cost for more generations than one. Even an ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer confesses that—now.

My first appearance at an evening drill in the dusk I admit was not a success. My rank, for one thing, was peculiar. I was called an Acting Temporary Lieutenant, and no one seemed to know what it was. I am certain I did not. As I entered the dimly lit barracks I bumped into a person who told me hotly that he was a major; he wasn't a real one, of course—the real ones I have met would have behaved very differently—any more than I was a real acting temporary lieutenant, but I apologised, because I couldn't see his tabs in the dim light.

I wanted to fight him and eat him, but a kind friend told me that I should infallibly be shot for *lèse-majesté* or something of that sort if I did, so I refrained.

The war party in which I eventually found myself

consisted of a multi-millionaire, my commanding officer (who didn't know me, and never shall), my friend, a great editor (who does and always will know me), and myself.

There were, I am afraid, no exciting events in this gallant regiment. I drove my car one evening three times round Regent's Park—to signals by whistles—to the vast amusement of the passing taxi-drivers, and during a strike my chauffeur drove two typists to Ilford.

(The petrol shortage was, of course, by this time acute.)

I was not given an O.B.E., so a fortnight before the Armistice I again resigned, in a purely voluntary spirit.

A year after the Armistice I had a perfectly jolly little letter from Winston Churchill thanking me for some valuable services I had never performed. The only thing of value I can recollect which I did on any of these comic enterprises—which, if comic, were costly to the national purse—was to provide a cold lunch with a bottle of red wine, warmed under the bonnet of the car, for the "military" geniuses who were my superiors.

Perhaps the thanks were for those services. I was, I suppose, luckier than most in my inane experiences. For evening after evening I used to see many poor devils who did not own cars forming fours in the dusk for hours, and you could see by the expression of their faces and their weary, nerveless movements that they had put in a hard and anxious day's work and were dog-tired. Yet they

were compelled to do this, just to let them know, I suppose, that there was no escape from militarism and bureaucracy, even if they were exempted as being on work of "essential national importance."

I used to think, as I watched their tired movements, that their next day's work of "essential national importance" was likely to be of no great value to the bureaucrats or to the nation. Waste; again, sheer waste.

As for me, what I cost the country in wasted time, wasted energy and wasted production, I do not know.

I should like the money.

III

Waste and war are inseparable, we are told.

That is, of course, a platitude; but surely there are two kinds of waste, the inseparable and the separable. We are now beginning to realise, only too sadly and well, that much of the wastage of life might have been spared, but it is not my province to criticise or to comment upon military operations. In spite of my military experience, my modesty forbids.

So I will content myself with the observation that the present-day spectacle of admirals and generals hurling bulky volumes of "Recollections" and "Reminiscences" at each other's heads by no means convinces one of the infallibility of the military experts.

Of the other species of war wastage, wastage of energy can surely be reduced to a minimum. That it was not sc

reduced, that the nation's energy was misdirected and misapplied in a thousand directions, is only too obvious to-day. And it is only too obvious that the parrot-cry of the bureaucrats : " All is for the best in the best of all possible wars ! " was merely devised to inspire confidence amongst the bureaucrats and to stifle criticism.

As for yet another species of wastage—the wastage of money—does anyone now attempt to deny that millions, many hundreds of millions, were flung away, owing to the sheer incompetence of the Bolshevik bureaucracy which had seized all power and strove to stifle all criticism ?

Criticise, and you were a " pacifist." Denounce idiotic and futile waste, and you were " pro-German."

About this time there was no more indecently comic spectacle than that of the smug, self-complacent, incompetent but autocratic type of bureaucrat—far too common for the health of the nation—warmly denouncing all critics as " *hostes humani generis.*"

I emphasise this type, which was a war product, for a special reason.

It was the type which, in the moment of agony, when brave men were dying daily by the thousand, and worse still, perhaps, when brave men were suffering hourly unspeakable agonies and horrible mutilations, as it donned its spotless uniform, surveyed itself complacently in the glass and before sallying out to fill its comfortably padded chair at its " soft " job was wont to murmur unctuously,

"War brings out all that is noblest in the human character," and to observe reverently to anyone who cared to listen that war was also a visitation of God.

There is not one among us who did not get to know this type and to know it too well.

As the war went on, and the flower of the youth and manhood of the nation came perilously near to extinction, so did this type increase in power and in numbers. Its members were, and are, war's sycophants. In their tens of thousands they secured " soft " jobs, were never in danger, did themselves remarkably well and squandered the nation's money in millions.

And it is they who have preyed on the fruits of victory—whatever fruits there may be.

As a rule, they are of two classes : the good-for-nothings, the peace failures, the men of no ability, who eventually were dragged into the army and by a lucky chance or influence secured a " job " ; and the men who looked upon the war as a godsend, a big money-making chance, and promptly seized on the " cushiest " and most lucrative " jobs " they could find, and sat on them, defying heaven and earth to move them. Of the two classes I almost think I prefer the latter.

Both of them, unfortunately, figured largely in our later militarism, and, as may be imagined, their presence did not conduce to the elimination of waste.

And they persist. I met one of them only the other day (1920), undemobbed and in receipt of pay, while

too many of the heroes of the Marne, Gallipoli and Mesopotamia are hungry in ragged "civies."

As I knew his military history, he did not succeed in impressing me.

He was one of those ordered, and ordered peremptorily, to "join up at once" in 1916, succeeded, heaven alone knows how, in obtaining an A.S.C. commission, was sent to the East and was never within some hundreds of miles of any firing line.

The talk was of the scarcity and price of food.

"On our front we had no shortage of anything," he remarked magniloquently.

"Sugar?" suggested some housewife.

"Sugar!" he cried in vast contempt. "We did run a little short and I said I wanted some at once, and over a £100 worth came down immediately! As we used to say in the army," he continued, "let's order whatever we can get and what we don't want, waste! Make the civilians pay; they're making pots of money out of our war." Or take another type I met (and he may be multiplied a thousand times), who, occupying a subordinate position at about £300 a year, joined up early so that he might get a "cushy" staff job before the rush came. He was appointed to look after what was really "waste paper," rose to quite a high army rank, never heard a shot fired in anger, had a Government motor car always at his disposal, received half-pay from one Government department for joining up and eventually another £650 a year for "war" (not warrior-

like) service. And the last I heard of him (eighteen months after the Armistice) he was, of course, still in the "army" and was considering the acceptance of another "military" appointment—again in "waste paper," as by this time he was an expert in it—at £1000 a year and a flat in quite a gay Continental city.

Physically he was splendidly fit, but his physical robustness was counterbalanced by his flimsy mentality. But, "By gad, sir!" he was a patriot, even though he did give me acute mental dyspepsia.

He "did his bit," with his paper pellets, and made me feel so very, very small when I thought that the thousands a year one paid in income tax to the nation after all merely sufficed to keep two or three great "peace soldiers" like him. But perhaps we should consider it our privilege to make some endeavour to make England—or Paris—a home fit for "Neros" to live in.

"Our" war! That is the attitude of the last-minute compulsory heroes who have made and are making a bankruptcy of peace.

They are dangerous—they have always been dangerous in war and in peace—to their own country.

And it is a mistake to ignore them. They have acquired a certain amount of power and of influence, as astute sycophants invariably do, and so long as a spendthrift bureaucracy survives, the sycophants of a spendthrift bureaucracy will have power.

And, moreover, so long as these folk have one particle of

power or influence, so long will waste persist, so long will productive " civilians " be exploited, and so much nearer will the crash of national bankruptcy approach.

Nor were these types confined to the " last-minute " militaristic species. Many were to be found entrenched amongst the "over military aged." I knew one such personally, who, in the early days of slaughter, said with unconcealed satisfaction: " I shall make seventeen millions during the war over so-and-so," which he did—and more.

The mentality of these types nauseated me.

Little did they care if the country went to ruin, that the flower of youth and manhood were annihilated, or that those who did the " real job " were asphyxiated and had their eyes literally blasted, were paid for their services a cash pittance which a scavenger would turn up his nose at, endured indescribable filth and suffering in a hell of agony, and after all this returned—to what ?—so long as they made their millions and secured their " jobs." And they were supported by the thousands of salaried bureaucrats, big and small, who had found the jobs of their impotent lives.

iv

It was in 1917 that I determined on publishing the views which I had formed as a mere business man, views which I knew were held by hundreds, even thousands, of my fellow-countrymen, and in April of that year I took the advertis-

ing columns of the Press for my first article, "Pity the Poor Civilian."

The article was simply and solely a protest at the extravagance and stupidity of an autocratic bureaucracy, and as I read it now I am amazed at my moderation. In the light of events every line of it seems now to savour of the obvious. "The bed-rock of the finance of the country," I wrote, "is the commerce of the country, and that commerce depends largely on the private enterprise of the civilian."

Could anything be more trite?

But the world had become a stranger to Truth and truisms, and I was amazed at the response the article provoked. A few weeks later I pursued the theme in a second article, "The Civilian looks Ahead," in which I opened by satirising the iniquitous methods of bureaucratic absolutism, and attacked the insane and wholly vicious blank cheque system.

It must be remembered always that at the time these articles appeared the war had dragged on for nearly three years and had become a business. Hundreds upon hundreds of men, with no commercial justification for existence, had settled placidly down into the "jobs" of their lives, and the bare possibility of an end to a system which provided them with a comfortable and easy living was a thing to be looked upon with horror.

As I have pointed out, these men were powerful.

If they had ever possessed souls; their souls were dead.

Money was their god, and the god of their most powerful supporters—the men who controlled the markets and could make millions with more ease than they could have made thousands before the war.

Again the response was amazing. Approving letters poured in upon me by every post, a large proportion being from fighting men, who were even then looking forward anxiously and doubtfully to the future of the land which they were assured was to be "fit for heroes to live in."

The publicity given to these articles gave me a public of some millions, and lurking amongst my readers I found the Censor. He seemed upset, and determined to justify his existence. After considering "Pity the Poor Civilian" until his head throbbed, he passed it, with the exception of one paragraph, in which I said: "The last wonderfully successful War Loan is already nearly spent."

This statement, he declared, could only be published on the writer's responsibility.

I published it because I knew it was true.

Although in these first two articles I dealt chiefly with the financial position and the appalling waste of public money—for which we have now to foot the bill—I had other motives in placing my views before the public. It was my method of obtaining the ear of an immense public which I knew was only too ready to listen, and of getting the thin edge of the wedge into the Press, so that I might ultimately be able to give a point of view of the war as a whole, and the methods on which it was being conducted

—methods which, I was convinced, could only result in national bankruptcy, whatever the result of the war—in a more daring, franker and more outspoken way than the handicapped professional writer could possibly do.

The third article, "The Sinister Unrest," I confess, seemed to me so outspoken for those tongue-tied times that for a time I was in doubt as to whether it would pass the Censor, or whether any editor would accept the responsibility of publication.

The inception of this article is not uninteresting.

I have been fortunate enough to number among my personal friends many of the leading editors. About this time I happened to dine with one who controls a London paper with a circulation of over a million, and we talked war and bankruptcy from seven in the evening until two in the morning. I found that his views on autocratic misgovernment and waste exactly coincided with mine, although the views expressed in his paper were of necessity guarded. The result of that evening's discussion was that he asked me to write an article on the lines of our lengthy talk. "You can write it, I daren't," he declared; "but I'll publish it."

I wrote the article, but when it was finished I knew that it was far too outspoken, and that if he published it—and his was the temperament that would have done so—there were bound to be unpleasant complications. So I decided to publish it myself in my own way.

Amongst many other papers, *The Globe* had published my

previous articles, and I determined to risk its first appearance in *The Globe.* Two columns were reserved by me in June, and, frankly, I expected them to jib. However, the article appeared, and within half-an-hour came a frantic telephone message from the Censor, insisting on the deletion of the following sentence :—

"Already one hears it whispered that the rulers who are responsible for carrying on the war are old men; that they are frightened to wind it up; that they are in such a ghastly mess they dare not. They fear their trial. And what is whispered to-day will be shouted to-morrow."

After the publication in *The Globe* the article appeared automatically in all the other papers I was using at the time. In this article I was glad to get in my first kick at the highly extravagant and incompetent old men who were so persistently howling for more sacrifices of blood and money.

On the third anniversary of the war I determined to publish what I then looked upon as by far the most important article of the series, "With Truth comes Peace," an article truthfully and carefully analysing the war, and written purely from the point of view I knew only too well, the point of view of the men holding on and suffering in the trenches.

The article demanded a definite statement of "war aims"—a comic demand nowadays, in view of the farcical results of a farcical Treaty of Paris.

In it I stated what two more years of war would infallibly

mean, and they have meant it. I dealt with the question of indemnities, and declared that in two more years Germany would be in a state of hopeless financial chaos. To-day, at the moment I write, the mark is 1½d. And Germany's "indemnity" is £1,000,000,000 a year, which, on the present rate of exchange, means over £8,000,000,000!

The article, as will be seen, was of the type then called "pacifist" by the fire-eating, prodigal bureaucrats, and my problem became to get some journal to accept the first responsibility for publication, for I had discovered that after one paper had published the rest did not trouble, but merely reprinted, thankful, no doubt, for interesting "copy" at advertisement rates.

A journalistic friend solved the problem for me.

He suggested a medium which I, frankly, should not have thought of, *The Morning Advertiser*, which paper was, and is, of course, the publican's organ, and would be unlikely to submit a two-column advertisement to the Censor. So the columns were purchased and the article appeared.

Within an hour or two of its appearance *The Daily Chronicle* asked for it and published it the next day, and eventually it appeared in *The Manchester Guardian*, *The Globe*, *The Star*, *Town Topics*, *The Herald*, *The Cambridge Magazine* and several other papers.

In this article I directly appealed for the opinions of readers. I got them!

I was inundated. For weeks I had a staff of three

opening letters and sorting them, not reading them, from nine in the morning until six at night. It took me literally weeks to read them, for a business must be carried on in spite of one's correspondence.

And those letters were wonderful.

Amongst them were thousands from men at the front, thousands from the wives and womenfolk of men at the front. And from the critical tone of those from the front I imagine that more thousands were intercepted by the Censor.

Out of the whole immense mass of correspondence barely a dozen disagreed with my article and that dozen was illuminating. The majority of dissentients were frankly and vulgarly abusive—and the vulgar letters were invariably anonymous; the minority consisted of one or two who honestly and consistently refused to accept my statement, and one or two—one, in particular, I remember, from a lad who had just reached the age of eighteen and was burning to fight—were heroically pathetic.

After this revelation I had but little doubt that, for all practical purposes, *all* who were not imbeciles or who were not making money or positions out of the war, agreed with me.

So I determined to go on.

V

It is interesting to look back upon the effect produced by the article, " With Truth comes Peace."

Apart from the usual inundation of letters, all sorts of people suddenly wished to meet me. Several members of both Houses of Parliament talked with me, and all agreed with the views I expressed, one peer going so far as to say that the famous Lansdowne letter which appeared some months after the publication of "With Truth comes Peace" was merely a feeble echo of my article. Nobody, it seemed, had dared to say so much before.

A well-known editor and publicist, whom I had not seen for two years, asked me to call and see him. At his office were several other public men, and his first words were: "If your article had been the leader of *The Daily Mail* we should have a decent workable peace next week."

Naturally, my views were opposed violently by the bureaucrats and the section controlling the conduct of the war, and questions were asked in the Commons as to whether the attention of the Government had been drawn to my articles and what steps were being taken to suppress them.

The Government answer was that "attention had been drawn to them and the matter was receiving consideration."

After the publication of "The Dawn of Sanity" I was warned privately by my friends in high places that I must be careful or I should be "put away." You may remember that under Dora the bureaucrats had instituted a system every bit as efficacious as the *lettre de cachet* of the old regime in France.

At about this time, October, 1917, I had arranged to take over the control of a certain weekly paper. In this paper I intended to publish the simple truth on many matters, including the conduct of finance and the conduct of the war. Although the matter of taking over this paper was arranged so rapidly that only three or four people at the outside could possibly have known anything about it, within four days I received a visit from a friend who was in a position of authority, whom I had not seen for months, and was warned by him that "the powers that were" knew all about a proposition which had only occurred to me a few days before, and that if I took over *the paper it would be stopped at once, and that, in the bureaucratic slang of the day, I should "go through it,"* and very unpleasantly too.

Since I had nothing to conceal, and knew by this time that I was merely voicing the views of thousands upon thousands of my countrymen and countrywomen, I continued to write, and published a "Personal Note," in which I dealt with the danger of sitting on the safety valve.

Some time later I experienced a curious instance of the bureaucratic methods.

I was lunching one day at Romano's and was hailed by a friendly newspaper director who was sitting with some political friends at another table. "Bradley," he said jokingly, "will you write me an article on 'How to get Peace by Advertising'?"

"Of course," I replied; "and I'll show you exactly how it can be actually done." I wrote the article, and it was published in a little paper called *Hello!* which is the house organ of *London Opinion*.

Whereupon the bureaucrats sung together like stars. "At last!" they cried, "at last!"

You see at this time, under Dora, one was liable to be prosecuted and persecuted for the publication of any political pamphlets, so within a day of the publication of "How to get Peace by Advertising" I found awaiting me at Bond Street a mysterious individual who asked to see me alone. Feeling for the first time in my life like a Bolshevist conspirator, I invited him into my room. He informed me impressively that he was from Scotland Yard, produced a copy of *Hello!* and said that he was instructed to ask me if I was the author of "How to get Peace by Advertising."

(Remember at this time (1917) any mention of peace was held to be not only indecent, but unpatriotic to the verge of treason.)

I replied, a trifle coarsely: "Don't be a damned fool. Can't you see that I have signed it?"

He refused to be drawn into conversation, refused even a whisky and soda, and left with an air of portentous gloom after I had desired him to present my compliments to Scotland Yard and to tell the authorities there was nothing in the world I should have liked better than a prosecution. Think of the publicity!

The bait was swallowed. It was "advertisement" I was after!

The bureaucrats could understand no purity of motive, and were horridly puzzled at the spectacle of a "secured" civilian, presumably making a decent living out of war essentials, and known to have no political "Party" leanings, expressing strongly critical views on matters of national importance. For a time they puzzled their brains, and after much mental perturbation finally rejected the labels "Pro-German" and "Pacifist" for "personal" advertisement—a suggestion which was thrown to them as one throws a bone to a dog, which was gnawed and mouthed with the same eagerness.

I then wrote to the Chief Commissioner and asked him to acquaint me with the reason for the call. It seemed to me to be desirable to get something definite out of them, no matter what. The official reply was to the effect that my article on obtaining peace by advertisement was an offence against Dora (ye gods and little, little fishes!), and that the desirability of taking proceedings against me was under consideration.

Somebody, however, managed to save the waste of money which an abortive prosecution would have brought about, for some bright genius amongst the authorities discovered that *Hello!* which they thought was a pamphlet, was a registered newspaper! Which, of course, I knew.

The festive season of 1917 Christmas was approaching (and what a merry Christmas it was!) and I was asked

by *The Herald* to do an article for their Christmas number.

That is how I came to write "The Reign of Youth."

Rather to my astonishment I found that "The Reign of Youth" seemed to act as a slight irritant upon several people who had hitherto agreed with me.

I sought for an explanation, and at last succeeded in finding one—the people who disapproved of this laudation of Youth were invariably old. And the passage they invariably criticised was that imaginary address of the youthful Prime Minister, when he demands conscription of the aged: "Citizens, if there *must* be war, let us remove at least one danger from our midst; let us place the old and irritable in the firing line. I ask the immediate call to the colours of all males over the age of forty-one." This disapproval of the elderly was not without its comic side.

"The Generation Magnificent" completed the series of nine articles attacking waste and the miserable misconduct of the war. This article appeared on 20th April 1918, so the series had run for exactly one year—from April, 1917, to April, 1918.

I think I may claim this for the articles: they were a patriotic attempt to make people realise the appalling dangers which menaced the nation if the courses which were being pursued by the bureaucrats were persisted in; they were certainly the most truthful and outspoken views which appeared in the London Press of the times, and by the method of publication I adopted they were placed

before a public of many millions, and were received with immense sympathy by a large home public and an appreciation which was revealed by the men in the trenches.

As I was frequently warned, there was a certain element of personal risk in the publication, but so long as they were published I cared nothing. For, after all, if the bureaucrats whose toes I had trodden on and whose corns I had galled had plucked up a little courage and clapped me in prison—as more than once they intimated to me through sub-channels was their intention—while the idea of prison life is not entirely amusing, I should have endeavoured to bear the trifling inconvenience with cheerfulness, and should have thought myself something of a coward not to be prepared to do so, when for years most of my personal friends were being killed and maimed, whilst I was living in comfort, warm, well fed, with a soft bed to lie on, wine to drink and cigars to smoke.

And should anyone still ask me the reasons which induced me to write these articles and persist in their publication after veiled threats and private warnings, I cannot do better than refer him to the following letter, which appeared in *The Nation* of 27th December 1919 :—

Youth and the War

We joined the army in the early enthusiasm of 1914. We were very young, and we knew little of life, for our experiences had scarcely begun. What we did know had been chiefly learned from books, and we had gathered, not

unnaturally, that human nature was very beautiful. Our lives and friendships were ideals culled from the war, and our patriotism was inspired by an exalted pride in our country. What we knew, in fact, was the ideal, and it was more than the real to us. We were happy that our country had gone to war, for we regarded it as a great adventure. We were going to do great things for one another and for the folks at home. We were going to win fame and glory, so dear to man, and some day we should return triumphant, with bands playing and colours flying. Long before we left England many a man thrilled at the thought of that homecoming. We really believed that we were going to fight for freedom, as the Press and the Government told us. Indeed we were very young! The devil must have had a good laugh as he watched us at our mad military manœuvres, rehearsing our part for the great drama. But we did not think of the devil in those days. We only longed for the day when we should embark for active service to take our part in the great struggle of right against Prussian might. And at last the long-awaited day of departure came. With light hearts we said good-bye to those we loved. But we little knew the journey before us.

We were sent to a distant theatre of war. It is not pleasant to dwell on our suffering. At first we endured cheerfully and wrote cheerfully home. Then we endured silently, and wrote cheerful lies for the sake of them at home. But there came a time when we could endure no longer. Our pride, our courage, all that we held dear

within us were gone. Worst of all, we had lost that faith in our cause which alone could give us the will and the strength to endure, for we knew that this was not a war for freedom, but the result of political bungling and trickery. All around us were destruction and misery so terrible, so vast, that all joy and happiness had been blotted out of existence. It was the end of the world. Some men went mad with the horror of it. Others put an end to their suffering. Nothing that we were fighting for seemed to justify this great sacrifice. One thought alone sustained life and hope; the thought of those who were dear to us, anxiously waiting at home, and praying that we might come back to them. And in our distress we turned to them for aid. We wrote and told them the truth, and beseeched them, if they ever wanted to see us again, to do everything possible to stop the war, for our agony was greater than we could bear. We felt comforted then, and waited in confidence for a reply. After weeks of waiting the letters so eagerly looked for arrived. But oh! the dismay when we read them! We had cried as drowning men for help; they did not so much as throw us a straw. In safety they stood on the bank and encouraged us—to stick it! They talked calmly of the ideals for which they were fighting, a free and better England, the freedom of small nations and the destruction of Prussian militarism. And they were going to see it through. We tore their letters to shreds.

The bitter truth forced itself on us, that between us and the people at home was an insuperable barrier, a hopeless

inability to feel and understand. In our greatest need they had failed us. They had reached the middle age of life, and comfort was their god. Their soul-possessing fear was that Germany might win and upset their life of ease and plenty. They would not even consider peace till Germany was crushed, for a Germany unbeaten was a menace to their peace of mind. So to their God of Comfort we were sacrificed, for the spirit of Father Abraham reigned in the nations of Europe. Bitterly we thought what fools we had been to rush into a trap like this, and we envied our dead comrades, who had at least been spared the pain of disillusion. For this was the greatest sorrow of all, to know that those we loved had betrayed us. We cursed the Press and the Government, who were gulling our fathers as they had gulled us in 1914. We cursed the war correspondents masking horror with glory and heroism. And we cursed the Censor, carefully shielding his people's tender feelings against the truth. But nobody heard us. The war went on, War Loans continued to be over-subscribed, and the world's slaughter-house continued to be a sound five per cent. investment.

When the Armistice came we could hardly believe that our misery was ended. To us the war had become eternal, and we had long given up hope of seeing England again. We had ceased to care, and we could not rejoice. for the capacity for rejoicing was dead.

We who have returned are not the boys who went away four years ago. We are sad, wise men, old before our time,

with the impress of horror on our souls. We can never forget what we have been through, nor our comrades who died for nothing. Nor can we forget that we were left to perish by the people we loved, by the very people who welcomed us home, the people to whom our hearts must ever be sealed. The veil has been torn from human nature and we stand aghast at its selfishness.

We have lost our ideals and our faith in mankind—at least in that part of mankind which stayed at home and won the war. And now life seems infinitely contemptible, without hope and without aim. We look in vain for that better England for which we were supposed to be fighting. The rich have grown richer and more grasping. They have exploited the patriotism of labour at home, even as they exploited the patriotism of youth on the battle-field. And the bulk of the nation is apathetic to it all. Instead of a better England we have a worse England—England grossly materialist, dominated by greed and void of compassion. Not that *we* want compassion, or charity, or gratitude, or the slightest recompense. But we do appeal to every man and woman to revive that better nature which died during the war and to join with us in helping England out of the degradation into which she has fallen.

A SOLDIER OF THE WAR.

vi

Although I took my campaign, crusade—call it what you will—in all seriousness, regarding it, indeed, as a species of

duty imposed upon me, life was not wholly without amusing incidents.

I was at this period in the habit of visiting the House of Commons fairly frequently; they seemed to want to talk to me, goodness knows why, and I was an invited guest again and again. Again and again I listened to interminable discussions and attempted solutions, and one evening, I remember, when my opinion was asked I became a little blunt.

"It is all very interesting to hear you talk and listen to you discussing the position," I said, "but what on earth is the use of talk and discussion in the Commons' dining-room? Why don't you take the Albert Hall and talk there, where people can hear?"

Rather to my surprise, I confess, the suggestion was received with enthusiasm. For one thing, it was an independent suggestion—I belonged to no party or clique—and so could be accepted without any loss of dignity. A free-lance and a non-partisan such as I was was an ideal intermediary at that time.

Roughly my idea was to get together several of the Liberal peers and the leaders of the Labour Party on a common platform, for the expression of free views and a general discussion of the situation and its trend.

The suggestion to take the Albert Hall was welcomed with positive glee, and I was deputed to interview some of the leading Liberal peers on the matter.

I saw them; they were also enthusiastic and within two

days after the matter had been first mentioned I took the Albert Hall for a certain date.

As I took it in my own name, I was the sole lessee of the place for that night and I was responsible for the meeting.

As the date drew near, however, hitches began to occur, as they always do in politics when it comes to agreeing upon a programme, and at one time I was left in the position of having the Albert Hall all to myself on a Saturday night. Whatever happened, I made up my mind to use the place, and determined that if everything else fell through, rather than let it " eat its head off " in idleness, I would celebrate the occasion by a small but unique dinner-party for eight, which I would have served at a small table in the very centre of the great floor. There would at least have been " atmosphere " and " space."

However, it was at last arranged that a meeting on the League of Nations should be held, with a list of speakers consisting of well-known politicians of various schools of thought and party, and my dinner-party was cancelled.

Applications for tickets poured in by the thousand, and all arrangements were completed, when, a few days before the appointed date, I received a notification from the Albert Hall authorities stating that the meeting could not take place. I protested, of course, but the Albert Hall people were adamant, and I began to suspect something more substantial than a " rat behind the arras."

This attempt, supposedly on the part of the proprietors of a hall, to suppress the liberty of opinion—and, mind you,

THE JUDGMENT OF PARIS

this was a meeting to discuss the League of Nations !—seemed to me to be of public interest, and as I have always been on the best of terms with all sections of the London Press, I at once informed them of what had happened and gave them the simple facts of the case.

One and all they were splendidly fair, gave the matter tremendous publicity and protested strongly against the action of the authorities in leaders and in special articles.

But even those protests failed to move the authorities, and I had resigned myself to the necessity of bringing an action at law when, as Rudyard Kipling has it, " a strange thing happened."

On the Thursday before the meeting was to have been held I was at a little dance in Chelsea, where the arty, the pseudo-arty and the moderately mad crowd forgather. Not a soul in the place knew that I had anything to do with so archaically Victorian a monument as the Albert Hall, and I was mildly shocked when a young girl of the " intense " type suddenly dropped a bomb-shell.

" You know they've prohibited the League of Nations meeting at the Albert Hall ? " she observed.

I confessed that I had read something about it somewhere.

" Well," she rambled blissfully, " there's going to be *such* a jolly rag. I know one of the electricians there and he tells me they're awfully wild about it, so they're going to cut the lights off in the middle of the Victory Ball ! "

Lord ! How I sat up ! But I turned a simple blue eye

on the damsel and murmured something about "How awful for all those who are not already blind."

The next morning I rang up the editor of a certain great paper which could not by any stretch of imagination be called "pacifist." We lunched together, and I told him the news.

"Good!" he chuckled. "If they do that you've beaten the lot!"

(Even the editor of a reactionary paper can sympathise with such things as liberty of speech.)

Meanwhile the anguished, would-be speakers were in hot confabulation, and sent entreating me to issue a writ at once against the Albert Hall people. (The comic part of the whole situation was that, as the hall was booked in my name, I was the only person who could make any move.)

I told them what was happening, and said that I should not take any action that day, but preferred to wait and see.

By this time, it appears, the indignant electricians had not been idle, and I heard that it had been arranged not only to cut the lights off at the Victory Ball, but that all electric trains should stop, and all buses and taxis should refuse to go near the neighbourhood of the Albert Hall! Of course the whole thing would have been a comic masterpiece of concerted action, but the electricians got so excited that they could not restrain themselves and cut the lights off the same day in the middle of some unfortunate concert.

This premature action "put the wind up" the folk in

authority, and on Monday I heard privately that the authorities had ordered the meeting to take place, which it did, and, incidentally, the Victory Ball was saved.

Over thirty thousand applications for tickets were issued, and the hall had to be taken for the Sunday as well as the Saturday. Both meetings were packed and thousands were unable to get inside.

And all this pother and all these arbitrary attempts to prohibit and all these interferences were in connection with a meeting held to discuss the League of Nations!

To such a pitch had bureaucratic government brought us in war-time.

. . . .

The truths I expressed in my series of articles in 1917 seem obvious enough now, but apparently it takes a nation at least three years to awaken to the obvious. In war-time the populace is spoon-fed, and that is why the free expression of opinion at such a time appears daringly original.

Had I, instead of writing as I sincerely thought and felt, adopted the easy course of smug hypocrisy, I should probably have reaped a rich material reward.

Occupying a commercial position with unique opportunities for accumulating blood-money during the war; possessing the ability, the intelligence, the wit and the subtlety to turn my publicist mind in any direction at will; had I been evil and material enough to have turned it to my own individual account, used it to my own benefit in

conformity with the methods of those in power, and in support of the clique who were filching the spoils of the greatest ramp the world has ever known--had I been cursed with this mentality, I should be now in possession of several Rolls Royces, and should require to summon an almost superhuman effort to avoid becoming Lord Bondsman of Bondage Street.

But avarice is not one of my cardinal vices and I am content now that the tragedy is over merely to aspire to be a Jolly Soul, instead of . . . its antithesis.

II

PITY THE POOR CIVILIAN

21st April 1917.

In the long-forgotten days of peace there lived a civilian. He paid his rates and taxes, ran his business at a profit to himself and to the country, did not ill-treat his wife, and generally had a good conceit of himself—poor fool !—as a patriotic citizen and a commercial asset of the Empire.

Then war came.

In the first flush of war-fever he determined to become a soldier, and after skipping about like a middle-aged Cupid clothed in a wrist-watch, being prodded in tender places and being looked at severely in the mouth—a rude thing to do even with a gift-horse—he was bluntly labelled " unfit."

So he went back to his business and was comforted by a speech about " silver bullets," and once again began to fancy himself as a commercial asset.

Taxes were raised and raised again and he paid them cheerfully. War Loans were floated and he subscribed to them, and little by little he began to regain some of his old self-respect as a mere civilian. Ministers thundered for more sacrifices, more War Loans, and he worked like a devil at his business because of those " silver bullets."

And, above all, he refrained from criticism of the powers that be, for someone had told him that criticism at such a time was unpatriotic.

He had been told that the war was a war of attrition.

And he soon realised it. All his fit employees had joined the colours and had been encouraged by him to do so; then they called from him the previously rejected, which he could not understand, because his business was one of national importance.

And so, sick at heart and worried to death about the silver bullet supply—for in his childlike way he persisted in connecting finance with commerce, even though that distinguished war-worker, Bernard Shaw, in his airy way, had dubbed him a " commercial cad "—he began to haunt the corridors of great ex-hotels in order to find out what was really wanted of him.

For months he haunted these lordly places, because he really wanted to find out whether he was a national asset, and if not where he should go to milk cows. But nobody knew, so he went out and subscribed to the new War Loan, and thought, and thought, and thought.

The end of the poor civilian is soon told. He took the only way out of the difficulty and, conquering his pride, determined to become a bureaucrat himself.

In due time his prayer was heard, for his aunt was the third cousin of a great man. So they gave him a big hotel in a highly eligible position and, like a modern Solomon, he sits surrounded by his six hundred secretaries and eleven hundred typists, and pronounces judgment on matters of which he possesses no knowledge at all.

And the worst of it is that too much of this tale is strictly true.

We are at war with despotism, yet it has seemed good to our rulers to bind the nation with chains. Never in all history has Great Britain been placed under such restrictions as to the liberty of the subject or individual enterprise.

The nation has accepted them patiently, patriotically, in the belief that they were necessary and that blunders are inevitable.

The bureaucrats have presumed on their immunity from criticism, and unless the waste of time, money and men is checked, official bumbledom put in its place, the reckless orgy of extravagance stopped, the country will soon be in as bad a financial plight as Germany.

The insane commandeering of great buildings, to be filled with enormous staffs doing incompetent work, is but one glaring example of too many. In Paris the Ministry of Munitions, the efficiency of which is one of the wonders of the war, is housed in one small building. In this country they would not hesitate to take over Westminster Abbey as an annexe.

An army of officials has been created and invested with autocratic powers; to whom they are responsible and the nature of their responsibility is unknown, even to the man whose business they are able to abolish with a stroke of the pen. Certainly not to Parliament, which has ceased to exist for all practical purposes.

At this moment we are the most despotically governed country in the world. We are liable to be turned out of

house and home if some bureaucrat finds himself in an expensive mood, and, while money is demanded from us unceasingly, our businesses, from which that money is to accrue, are hampered with irritating and unnecessary interference.

At the present moment it is not too much to say that every business man stands aghast at the manner in which the business of the country is being conducted, a manner which would bring any ordinary commercial enterprise to bankruptcy within a week.

In fighting a dangerous despotism abroad we are blundering at home into a state of affairs which will soon be equally dangerous. It has not even the merit of efficiency.

The last wonderfully successful War Loan of £1,000,000,000 is nearly spent. What will happen if business is not maintained and encouraged?

The nation has been told to economise: *quis custodiet ipsos custodes?*

It is time also that we should clearly understand what we are fighting for and to what purpose we are paying this appalling toll of blood and money.

We are at war with despotism and we are fighting to stamp out the Hohenzollerns and the Hohenzollern tradition, and unless that is done we have lost the war. When the throne of the Hohenzollern falls the whole fabric of despotism falls with it.

Even as our extremely sane ancestors realised that, as

the whole Napoleonic system centred in the person of Napoleon, it was necessary to seize and cage the man, so must we deal with Frederick William Victor Albert Hohenzollern.

At the door of this man lies the direct responsibility for the deaths of millions of men, the dishonour of countless women and the mutilation of children. He is no ornament to the world, this makeshift piece of human clay, with a withered arm, a cankered ear and a proneness to megalomania.

The Hohenzollern tradition is one of brute ferocity, lying and a disregard of the laws of humanity, with occasional excursions into bad verse and insanity. There is nothing worth preserving in this race. It is a menace to the world.

But the Hohenzollern system is one of deadly efficiency, and if we hope to conquer we must also seek for efficiency. We have heard much about "fighting to the last man and penny." The last man depends on the last penny; if it is not forthcoming the man in the trenches is betrayed.

And it is the civilian who must find the last penny. In all probability in a few months' time the war will be costing £8,000,000 a day. Where is that money coming from? The bed-rock of the finance of the country is the commerce of the country, and that commerce depends largely on the private enterprise of the civilian.

At the present moment the State takes a huge propor-

tion of all profits, and yet infers that many businesses are unnecessary.

Under such a system countless profitable concerns, of great commercial value to the State, will shortly get down to that last penny, and as a source of revenue will cease to exist.

To the millions who are actually fighting our battles in the field an everlasting debt of gratitude is due. These men command our respect, and the commercial community will not hesitate to make any sacrifice to provide the money needed so long as they remain free from the shackles of the bureaucracy.

The finance of Britain has saved her and has saved the Allies. The bureaucracy must remember that not only are they unproductive of money, but they are a colossal charge on the country, whilst the commercial community are not only financing the war, but are maintaining Britain's credit.

In expressing my views I lay claim to a certain amount of disinterestedness. I seek to protect all commercial interests, which are of the utmost value to the country at the present time. Each profitable private business is, I contend, a national asset of increasing value and importance.

Logic will in all probability prevail in the end, but at the moment, I confess, I lie in fear of the day when a Ministry of Economy will be appointed and housed in the Ritz.

III

THE CIVILIAN LOOKS AHEAD

2nd June 1917.

IT was the dawn of the year 1920. The sunrise bell echoed down the bare, uncarpeted corridors of the Government hostel for civilians—a commandeered Rowton house—and the poor civilian rose from his plank bed with a groan, donned his threadbare standardised clothes, bolted his standardised breakfast in the great hall of the hostel and set forth on his standardised day of standardised work.

As he passed the bureau at the entrance to the hostel a rough voice called him, and he entered, to find the official with a balance-sheet in his hand.

"You must be prepared to do better this year," said the official threateningly. "I see that last year your profit was a miserable £10,000, from which the Government only get 97½ per cent."

"I am doing my best for my country," stammered the poor civilian sadly.

"You are getting into arrears," said the official sternly. "We allow you to keep 2½ per cent., and at the present price of swedes it doesn't pay for your board and lodging here. You business men have no ambition. You should not be content with a turnover of a hundred thousand pounds; double it, treble it, quadruple it. We must have more money. Concentrate! Concentrate! We have furnished you with a hostel; we feed you, we clothe you;

we have relieved you of all personal cares. It is your duty to make more money to clear off your arrears of taxation."

"But how can I?" said the poor civilian timidly. "Look at the trade restrictions."

"How dare you argue, civilian! Go away and read the latest Board of Trade guide to commercial success. 'Be docile and you will be happy.'"

And the poor civilian started to his office.

On his way he paused at the corner of Berkeley Square. There stood his old home, the haunt of so many memories. The windows stared blankly, dully—blindless and cobwebbed. Many of the window-panes were missing, and he noticed wearily a furtive cat performing his ablutions in the littered porch.

Poor old home!

How well he remembered being turned out at a few hours' notice when one of the early ministries commandeered it—that was the second year of the war, he thought—and since then it had stood tenantless, deserted, falling into slow decay because it had not enough bathrooms, and there were twenty-three doors.

It had always been good enough for him. But, then, his notions had never been extravagant.

He walked on and reached his office. After seeing that his "time" was correctly checked by the representative of the Board of Timekeeping, he apologised to the army corps of Government typists, billeted on him by the Board of Typists, for the insufficiency of *poudre de riz*, and was

about to compose himself to work when he was interrupted by the sudden entrance of a representative of the Board of Mutual Admiration.

"A new form," explained the official briefly. "Sign it."

The poor civilian glanced at the paper. It contained a series of affirmations.

"*This is the best, wisest and greatest of all possible Governments.*"

"*Everything is for the best if it says it is so.*"

"*It is unpatriotic and impertinent to breathe one word of criticism.*"

"*I am perfectly happy and contented with anything any Board, Department, Bureau, Minister or official has done, may do, or can do.*"

"*I will be good, and I will try to be happy.*"

"*I know nothing about business or business methods; the Government knows everything.*"

"*I love the Government. Everything it does is right. Long may it govern.*"

And reaching for a pen—he awakened from his dream.

As he wiped his moist forehead he laughed, but shuddered again, for, fantastic as the nightmare had been, it had contained one or two grim elements of actuality.

Every business man knows that the secret of success is method and elimination of waste.

The commercial community has paid, is paying, and will have to pay for the war. Not only is this war a ghastly annihilation of mankind; it is a war of financial annihilation. And 1917 is the critical financial year. Britain to-day is thriving only on an artificial prosperity—on the proportion of the seven and a half millions a day spent in the country. In other words, we are living on borrowed capital. But what of the reckoning?

The patriotism of the commercial community is not in issue. The business man is willing to sacrifice all, to endure all, to pay all, but he has learnt by experience that the system of signing blank cheques is vicious. He wants accounts, and he wants estimates free from errors of a couple of millions a day (the war, we are suddenly told, is costing us £7,450,000 a day). He wants to be sure that the method is sound and that there is no avoidable waste.

He wants to be sure that his sacrifices are being utilised to the full, in order that his sons and the sons of the men who are suffering and dying in the trenches may not inherit a bankrupt concern and become citizens of a bankrupt State.

All war is waste, wicked, damnable waste, but there is the unavoidable waste and the avoidable. The "blank cheque" system and the insane attempt to stifle intelligent criticism have failed to check the avoidable waste, which, if continued, will ultimately leave us with a colossal debt which will be a millstone round the necks of the coming generations.

There is nothing unpatriotic in saying this. Germany is in a far worse condition. She is gambling with paper on the chance of a military victory, but when the war ends she will be unable to settle. In neutral markets the German mark now stands at 7¼d. (nearly 40 per cent. discount). Germany can afford to gamble because she is already financially beaten. Britain cannot afford to gamble because her future as a nation depends upon her financial resources.

We have signed the blank cheques and we ask whether we are getting value for our money. We know we are not.

Department after department has arisen; bureaucrats swarm in thousands and tens of thousands; huge ex-hotels are thronged with staffs of incompetent "flappers" earning inordinate wages—and what are the results?

A hopeless confusion of contradicting orders, instructions and restrictions.

One day we are told to go meatless and the next day we are encouraged to eat meat. One day we are ordered to eat two courses, the next we are graciously allowed to take five—stomachs permitting. Don't wear new clothes—wear standard suits. Eat less bread—eat more caviare. Don't be extravagant this Christmas—go on buying War Loan Certificates. And so on *ad infinitum.*

The National Service Scheme has become a joke, but such a bad and stupid joke, in that it has cost the country hundreds of thousands. Still, one's philosophy comes to

the rescue, when one considers they might have taken the Carlton instead of St Ermin's.

A scrape of the pen stops racing on the pretence of a shortage of oats. Then we are told the oats shortage is not the reason, but public opinion demands it; "public opinion" as represented by faddists and mandarins ignorant of all interests involved, save their own puny prejudices.

One would dearly like to hear "public opinion" on many things—the real "public opinion" of the army, the navy and the civilian. It would be illuminating.

Example may be piled upon example, but still the old men and the incompetent howl for more sacrifices, more blank cheques, and waste more money and more men. It is a tragedy which demands a superhuman sense of humour in order to retain one's sanity.

Intelligent criticism is a panacea and must never be stifled. It is a panacea sought for by the brave and feared only by the weak.

For the sake of our own sons, and for the sake of their sons, let us from now endeavour to put our house in order. Let them not find their heritage an insolvent country given over to a despotic and unintelligent bureaucracy. Let modern business methods be applied to the business of the country.

Europe is to-day paying a terrible price for the errors of the older generation, which the younger generation is spilling its life blood to wash out. But must it be only the

blood of our young men that is spilt? Should they not now be given the chance to spend their brains? Has the older generation done so brilliantly that it can claim a monopoly of wisdom in any sphere? Let some endeavour be made to save us from the twin friends, Incompetency and Waste, and their satellite, Bureaucracy. Let the millions of sacrificed men and the millions of money be treasured and used only with the utmost efficiency.

Let commerce be maintained, fostered and encouraged, and not treated with contumely, and hampered out of existence by illogical restrictions. Let construction and not destruction henceforward be the ruling policy, so that when peace is declared we may prove ourselves worthy combatants in the industrial war which will follow.

IV

THE SINISTER UNREST

23rd June 1917.

"'Opinion in good men,' says Milton, 'is but knowledge in the making.'" "All opinions, properly so-called, are stages on the road to truth."—ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

THIS war will be won in terms of peace. And then will come the greater struggle: the restoration of order out of chaos—the setting of the house in order.

In a few weeks' time we shall have reached the end of the mystic three years, the period assigned by authority which was for some reason accepted by the multitude as the extreme limit of the world agony. And the end is not in sight.

Nine millions of young lives lost, countless millions of treasure dissipated, civilisation, as we understood it, become a by-word—that is the debit side at the end of three years. And yet with this terrible debit to the account of war the cold experts are calculating the effects of the advent of America's army into the field in 1918, and are estimating the possible decisions attainable in the year following. The immensity of a struggle in which twenty millions of fighters are engaged has been at last realised, and the end has disappeared beyond the horizon of human vision.

Meanwhile a virile generation stands in danger of extinction, the flower of the boyhood of the world grows in its millions to military age, and the prophecy of the great

Russian general that the war might last for two hundred years seems no longer beyond the bounds of possibility.

There is here no criticism of the military genius of the British Command, who have performed miracles, confronted as they are with a colossal, an inconceivable task.

. . . .

But the peoples of the world who are spilling their blood, the fighting fathers who see their sons growing to the age when they also will be sucked into the vortex, are asking : "How long ?" And the end is not in sight.

I meet men of every class—soldiers, sailors, workmen, business men, merchants, professional men, manufacturers and capitalists—and do not seek to express my own opinion in this article ; an individual opinion on a matter of such moment would be worthless. But all whom I meet are war-weary ; their spirit is the spirit of revolt.

Against what ?

I am convinced the vital moment has arrived when the truth should be spoken.

. . . .

Surely no nation ever went to war with a more splendid spirit, with a nobler ideal. And, surely, never was the psychology of a nation so miserably misunderstood by its rulers. If ever a nation flamed into the purest patriotism the British nation did in August, 1914. Reverses in the field, disappointments, sacrifices, failed to dim the flame ;

then why is the present spirit throughout the country the spirit of resentment and unrest ?

We have been wrongly treated by our rulers, who have wholly failed to understand us and our aims. From the first we have been treated as children—children who could never be trusted with the realities and truth.

At the most tremendous moment in its history the nation is inarticulate.

Does anyone assume that the Defence of the Realm Act, a hurried piece of emergency legislation, would be passed in its present form by a representative parliament ? This war has taught us one thing—nothing is immune from criticism, there is no human institution that is sacrosanct, not even the Defence of the Realm Act.

The liberty for which we are fighting is already gone. The nation is stricken dumb, bound hand and foot, hemmed in, thwarted, tongue-tied, and, worse still, goaded to unrest by restrictions it never contemplated, does not understand, may not discuss, and which can serve no possible end except to conceal the failures of the politicians and the bureaucrats.

We are enchained by the most unsatisfactory autocracy an intelligent nation has ever writhed under, an autocracy in which every little bureaucrat makes his own particular hell, in which he and his satellites devise new ordeals for the citizens.

What are the results of this system of repression and restriction ?

Will anyone be found to deny the unrest ? Men and masters, labour and capital, revolt alike at the insanity of the system.

The Defence of the Realm Act must be intelligently amended.

. . . .

The wickedest, the most damnable traitor to the country is the food profiteer. How has he been dealt with in the mystic three years ? We are told there is to be a brand-new system of food control. It is time ; and labour may be forgiven its scepticism.

Hitherto food control has meant little more than dabbling in "courses," bungling in beans and fiddling with impossible substitutes.

Meanwhile, even with the higher wages, the poor can barely get enough to eat, and prices have been allowed to soar to such a scandalous extent that the wives and children of our soldiers, the men for whom we at home are trustees, are robbed and starved.

The Press teems with correspondence bewailing the hard lot of the officer's wife ; it is hard enough in all conscience, but what of the lot of the wife of the ex-bank clerk, the man with the "one-man business," who is serving, bleeding, dying as a private ? They are to be numbered by the million and are the real victims of the profiteer demon.

What of the soldier in this country ? He is fed, but,

vulgar as it may seem to the apostolic school, he likes his beer and his smoke. Beer is not only difficult to obtain, but is at a prohibitive price for the possessor of an income of 1s. 2d. a day; and cigarettes at double their normal price represent to him a wild extravagance.

What of the discharged soldier, the man who has done his bit, got smashed at the front and is now called up for re-examination? There is no Government indiscretion which has aroused greater resentment than the Re-examination Act. The politicians glibly promised "sympathetic" treatment. We know that the deaf, the maimed, the discharged are being passed into the army. This is the sort of thing that outrages the great British notion of fair play and fosters the spirit of revolt, distrust and resentment.

Is the business man content, restricted to such an extent that he may not develop his business to meet the enormous taxation?

What of the merchant, utterly at the mercy of some bureaucrat, who can commandeer his stock at a moment's notice under the Defence of the Realm Act?

What of the capitalist who cannot invest any further capital in industrial development because, however successful he may be, the 80 per cent. excess profits' tax, with the income tax added, leaves him, as a rule, with an actual loss for his risk and labour?

There is resentment and revolt in the heart of nearly every man in every class in the British Empire to-day.

And the cause is the utter lack of psychology on the part of the few who are attempting to govern.

Why is it, when Prussianism stinks in the nostrils of the world, the nation asks: "What are we fighting for?"

That question, as the men who govern fail to understand, is ironical. In reality it means:

"We are in the third year of the war and have lost—freedom of speech; freedom of Press; liberty of the subject; rights to property; a representative Government.

"What have we gained?—broken pledges, bureaucracy, profiteering, corruption."

. . . .

There is another curious factor in the unrest which possesses the nation, and that is the growing spirit of antagonism of the young against the old. All the cartoons published of those in authority in the belligerent countries depict old men. The old men rule and send the young to battle; the old men, who should have foreseen, forestalled, prevented—the old men to whom the world tragedy is due. The idea grows that the old men are using the young. I heard it asked the other day in a Tube train: "Who howl for more sacrifices, the men who are fighting or the old men at home?"

When we talk of "public opinion" and "opinion after the war," the only opinion that will count will be that of the men who have fought for us, are fighting and will have

to fight, not the opinion of those who sent them out—used them.

We hear every day of our lives discussions on revolution, a curious and a significant thing in this Britain of ours. We do not want a revolution, it would be fatal to us, and we must do all in our power to avoid it.

But we must have evolution.

And evolution under the present restrictions of speech and thought is impossible. The great revolutions are those of manners and thought, and such a revolution has already taken place in England. It must have play; it must have scope beyond the present dreams of the bureaucrats.

The danger is a real one if the governing powers do not abandon their present methods, which only tend to foster and incite the spirit of revolt and discontent.

We must be constructive and not destructive.

We must reconstruct patriotism, the love and pride of one's country, and endeavour to make it and keep it a country worth living in.

. . . .

The nation must be no longer inarticulate. We must gather and glean from intelligent opinion, and to do that we must have free speech and a free Press on all national questions.

The people who are bleeding and suffering are bleeding and suffering for a new world, a new and clean ideal, which

is in its birth-throes. Magna Charta, the Bill of Rights, Habeas Corpus are gone.

Millions are dead, millions are to die. Millions are inarticulate. The unrest grows.

Armageddon is too great to be played behind the scenes by a tiny cast of unrepresentative politicians or by a few unthinking pacifists.

Government of democratic Britain must be by consent of the governed, and the people of Britain demand a voice not only in the continuance of the war, but in reconstruction and in the vital terms of peace. The nation must be free to express and discuss, or the crash comes.

V

WITH TRUTH COMES PEACE

4th August 1917.

WE are fighting for a world peace.

This war is a war of peoples, and the peace must be a people's peace, not a peace of politicians.

It is a mad paradox, in this the end of the third year of the holocaust, that the word "pacifist" has been degraded in certain circles for purely political motives and is used as a term of opprobrium, when the whole bleeding, suffering world is pacifist, in the sense that it is fighting for the conditions of a lasting peace. And the greatest, purest-minded pacifists of all are the men who are hourly going through hell and dying for peace ideals.

Yet at the bare mention of peace the politicians the world over, smug in the security of their parliamentary dug-out, bang with renewed frenzy their political drums, and shout hotly and vaguely of more sacrifices.

Were the world rational—which it is not—there would be one subject of discussion in every club, every home, every paper and every parliament—peace terms and the endeavour to arrive at the irreducible minimum of give and take, which sooner or later must be reached, and put an end to the world agony.

But "Hush!" say the politicians.

"It is too delicate and complex a subject for a passion-

ate and ill-informed mob to handle. Leave peace to the experts who made war possible; meanwhile, bleed on."

The war will end with a dozen men seated round a table, arguing and bargaining, each playing a game, each provided with a certain number of cards, and each with a trump card—the irreducible minimum—concealed up his sleeve.

The trump cards will represent what each country has been fighting for, the peace conditions which each country is willing to accept. Those cards are in existence at the present moment, and, if played to-day, would represent the saving of millions of lives, millions of treasure.

Each people has a right to know what it is bleeding, paying for.

We know what the war is costing us. Let us know our aims.

Unless great events happen within a matter of weeks the war will, in all probability, endure for two more years before a military decision can be reached. And even this is an optimistic view.

Let us face dispassionately what two more years of war will mean for us. Six thousand millions more in money, and a million or more young lives, the flower of the nation, exterminated.

If it is necessary in the fight for freedom and democracy we will go on. But we must be convinced that it is necessary, and we must know now what are the terms we hope to gain.

Let us know our aims and let us analyse their worth. A flatulent minority of old men retain the vision of the final curtain with the Hohenzollerns being publicly tried at the Old Bailey, and the imagination of elderly Cabinet ministers does not seem to rise beyond dictatorial discussions, conducted by us on the other side of the Rhine. But these men are neither fighting nor suffering, unless vicariously, and their voices, though shrill, are of infinitesimal weight against the unexpressed opinions of the tongue-tied fighters.

The Russians have laid down their terms in a phrase: "No annexations and no indemnities."

The indemnity question solves itself. To the financial mind it is ludicrous. After two more years no nation will be able to pay an indemnity. At a modest estimate two more years' war will cost the belligerent countries twenty thousand millions. Germany has been bankrupt for the last eighteen months. The German mark is now worth sixpence. She can continue to gamble in her own country on paper while the war lasts, but on the declaration of peace she will be in a state of hopeless financial chaos. Britain is financially sound to-day, but if the reckless orgy of Governmental expenditure and bureaucratic extravagance is not curtailed it will be impossible to answer for her financial solidity at the end of the war.

It is only logical to dismiss the question of indemnities. Let the Government declare their minds on annexations.

To arrive at sanity we must ignore the bombastic maximum and keep firmly to the irreducible minimum.

What is our irreducible minimum? Is it Alsace and Lorraine? Is it the German Colonies? Is it Armenia? Is it Poland? Is it the democratisation of the Jugo-Slavs? Or are we willing to listen to the voices of America and of Russia, and of the majority in the Reichstag, and agree to a discussion on the fundamental basis of "no annexations"?

Let the Government then declare our final terms; let it convince us that these final terms are essential to the cause of freedom, and there is not a man in Britain who will not be prepared to go on to the last shilling and the last man.

But if we are to make our final sacrifice, we demand an explicit purpose. The world is nauseated by the evils of secret diplomacy and the blunders of incompetent politicians. It demands the rulers to come out into the open and speak the truth, and its demands must be answered, or the menace of revolt will be rampant.

We have no more use for the vapours of politicians who live in murky clouds. Let them come down to reality and to the hell which reigns on earth.

And let us know our aims.

And if the direct and simple statement of our terms of peace is not acceptable to the Central Powers, and if our irreducible minimum is essential to the cause of freedom, then let it in reality be a war to the "last man" and not to "the last young man."

There must be equality of sacrifice, and the old must take their stand beside the young. At the present moment the old men are running the world. Dare anyone say competently, effectively? The young are dying and inarticulate.

The only opinion worth listening to on the actualities of Armageddon is the opinion of the man who is in it, has seen it, felt it—perhaps worst of all, smelt it. What are his views?

Here is a letter from a young officer who has been through the hell:

"*To many of us the greatest trial that this war has brought is that it has released the old men from all restraining influences and has let them loose on the world. They have never been so free from contradiction. In our name (and for our sakes, as they pathetically imagine) they are doing their very utmost, it would seem, to perpetuate, by their appeals to hate, intolerance and revenge, those very follies which have produced the present conflagration.*"

If grim necessity compels us to face the prospect of a war of attrition, there must be no more half measures. The old must share the sacrifices of the young.

A bill must be introduced into Parliament at once "that the age limit be abolished, and that all males between the age of forty and sixty be conscripted for active service." It is the only way the old can save their faces with the

young, and it will end the stupid game of words—of brands from the mouths of those who do not fight.

Let us get rid of illusions and face truth. The romance of war is gone. To-day, in this civilised, cultured, scientific twentieth century of ours, war is a matter of dirt, stenches, trenches, and silent uncomplaining heroism unknown to our fathers. The romance of war can no longer exist with poison gas and liquid fire, with drowning women and murdered children.

The soldier of to-day does not, in the windy phrase of the politician, "Wait with a light heart and starry eyes to go over the top." It is an insult to a brave man to paint him in such colours. There is no joy in mud and lice, and only the sternest sense of duty compels him to live in filth and face death hourly.

If the war is to endure there must be drastic reforms of the entire methods of government.

The peoples of the world are awake to the iniquities of secret international diplomacy. They are weary of broken pledges and promises and demand the truth. And first and foremost they demand a definite statement of terms which are essential to a world peace.

If we are fighting for Alsace and Lorraine we must be told now. If for the German colonies, or for Mesopotamia, we must be told now. Then we may count the cost and estimate the value in lives.

If Germany is fighting to annex Belgium, Northern France or Poland, she must be led to say so definitely, and

if those are her terms, then, for the sake of democracy and freedom, we shall be prepared to fight on, every man of us, young and old, and with a fresh heart, a revived spirit and a clear vision.

But Armageddon must no longer be fought on an obscured issue, and the rulers must no longer be permitted to ride off in vague and windy perorations.

The whole world, and not Britain alone, is tired of flatulent comparisons of enemies to rats, rabbits and hornets, and in appeals to the local divinity. It wants the truth.

The Germans now say they are fighting a defensive war.

If that is so, that is an end of annexations.

There is not a man in Britain who would favour a German peace, but a peace of " no annexations " would mean the utter defeat of German militarism and the complete defeat of the German nation, financially and morally.

Germany entered on the World War in order to spread German Kultur, Germanise the world—and to expand her colonial empire.

A peace without annexation and without expansion is the downfall of the German war aims.

We declare we are fighting for freedom and the rights of small nations.

On the declarations of both sides—if the rulers speak truth—there is sufficient common ground for the statement of peace terms of the irreducible minimum.

And if the terms of peace are eventually agreed on

the basis of "no conquests," then Armageddon will at the very least have proved, by its stupendous failure, the colossal waste, the stupidity and the utter futility of militarism to future generations.

When Truth comes, Peace is in sight.

VI

THE DAWN OF SANITY

8th September 1917.

"*Opinion in good men is but knowledge in the making.*"—MILTON.

TRUTH, so long a stranger in these days of Armageddon, is now so rare that its effect is startling.

Many, with their limited vision, are seeking to discover my reasons for publishing this series of articles—of which this is the fifth. The simplicity of their purpose is readily understood by the people, but the truths they contain are so distressing to the political mind that questions have even been asked regarding them in Parliament.

I belong to no political body, and my motive is clear and definite. It is to ventilate the true state of public opinion, and above all the opinion of the dumb millions who are fighting and suffering, and to help to bring this war to a victorious conclusion in accordance with that opinion.

Let me disarm the questioners. In the early days of the war, realising the immensity of the struggle, I was one of the first public advocates for Conscription. My article, "The Sinister Unrest," anticipated completely the report of the Labour Commission, and again, in *The Globe* of 25th April of this year, I anticipated President Wilson's reply to the Pope when I wrote:

"*It is time also that we should clearly understand what we*

are fighting for, and to what purpose we are paying this appalling toll of blood and money.

"*We are at war with despotism, and we are fighting to stamp out the Hohenzollern and the Hohenzollern tradition. . . . When the throne of the Hohenzollerns falls, the whole fabric of despotism falls with it.*

"*The Hohenzollern tradition is one of brute force, lying and a disregard of the laws of humanity. There is nothing worth preserving in this race. It is a menace to the world.*"

If I am a propagandist or a pacifist—whatever that may mean—by pressing for a definite statement of our aims, then I have the satisfaction of being in the admirable company of President Wilson.

Three years of daily contact with men from the trenches, and masses of correspondence from men still out, cannot fail to illuminate, and it enables one to write with authority. Theirs is the only opinion that counts, and they are inarticulate.

It is so easy for the valiant tongue-fighters to sit smugly in their homes talking bravely of fighting to the last man and deriding discussions of peace. To the man who is hourly enduring hell, peace brings the end of his agony. Do you think that he does not ponder and discuss the possible terms which may achieve the aims with which he went to fight and bring the hideous suffering to a close ?

He is face to face with the ghastly realities ; there are no illusions for him in war ; he does not prate of going

over the top with a " light heart and starry eyes " ; there is nothing of hell hidden from him ; the end is his one desire, the end which justifies his sufferings and his agonies, the blood, the lice, the stench, the unspeakable filth.

He discusses war aims, and with every right he demands passionately a definite statement of the irreducible minimum, for such a statement brings peace nearer.

Let us hear no more of the stupid statement that to discuss peace is to " let down the men in the trenches." It is a shameful lie. And let our ministers and their elderly bellicose audiences remember that when next a speech is made on war aims the nation wants no more vague rhetoric, punctuated with " Laughter " and " Loud Laughter." This is no moment for laughter, when the peoples of the world are drowning in tears and blood.

We are in the fourth year of the war. Millions are dead, millions are to die, and the end is not in sight. The whole world is sick of blood and slaughter, tired of windy phrases from the politicians. The day of illusions is past ; let us get down to actualities. Let us attempt at least to arrive at Truth and Sanity. How are we to do this ?

We must arrive at the true state of public opinion—not public opinion as misrepresented and distorted by the inspired, controlled and dictated Press—the opinion of the millions of the cream of the nation's youth who are suffering and enduring all.

The Government at this moment is as much out of touch with public opinion as they were with labour unrest.

The system of political censorship must be abolished. A censorship is imperative in time of war for military purposes only. Truth and sanity will only arrive with the free expression of opinion. When a great free democracy goes to war for democratic ideals, for freedom, it is iniquitous that in the fourth year of unparalleled agony it is muzzled by a censorship of opinion and discussion, and muzzled only in the interests of secret diplomacy.

We went to war with perfectly definite aims. Democracy defended itself against an outrageous autocracy. What are our aims now ?

They are obscure ; perhaps they are known to the War Cabinet, but the nation and the nation's armies are in ignorance.

We must have them, and we must be free to discuss them. And if a General Election becomes necessary, then it must be an election in which soldiers and sailors are free to vote.

What is the position to-day with regard to peace terms among the Powers ?

Russia is unchangeable: "No annexations and no indemnities." America declares she seeks no material advantages of any sort. Punitive measures and dismemberment of empires are specifically repudiated. What are our Government's aims ? Unknown, beyond a vague notion of destroying German militarism by force

of arms, which must, at an optimistic estimate, take at least two to three more years.

The papal note must not be ignored. The Pope is still a great international power. He is not pro-German ; he is pro-peace. He advocates a return to the *status quo*, and the *status quo* with security for the future represents the American aims.

If we value this Empire of ours, if we value the lives we have lost, and are hourly losing, if we care for the new generations that will have to be flung into the furnace, if we have one spark of real patriotism, let us strive with every fibre in our being for truth and sanity ; let us shut our ears to the enthusiastic non-belligerents over military age who seek to deafen us with their war whoops. Let us strain to grasp the true position.

There is a common ground in the aims of all the warring nations—nations, not rulers—and in that common ground is the irreducible minimum which each nation is prepared to accept, and which brings the peace we fight for.

America and Russia repudiate material gain ; we entered the war in the cause of freedom ; even the German junker class at last realise the futility, the impossibility of indemnities. The Reichstag Peace Resolution—a resolution in favour of peace without annexations—represents the opinion of 90 per cent. of the German people. But the Reichstag has not the power to decide the destiny of the German nation.

What is the solution of the problem of the world tragedy?

Let the German people demand that the Reichstag shall be given the same powers of government as the British House of Commons. And peace is in sight.

Either that or the abdication of the Hohenzollern, which we have neither the right nor the power to dictate.

"There must be no next time" is another of the favourite phrases of the politicians. There *will be* no next time. Democracy has found war out and militarism stands discredited. The greatest military machine the world has ever known failed utterly in the first six months of this war to destroy its unprepared enemies, was compelled to witness their belated preparations, powerless to prevent them, and now thwarted, balked, hemmed in, bankrupt, adjures its people wildly to hold on in a defensive war. Militarism stands utterly discredited to-day, and no nation, not even the German nation, will embark upon a world war at its bidding so long as one memory of the present agony remains.

Militarism is discredited, and discredited beyond contempt is the secret diplomacy which has made the present possible.

The peoples will decide the issues, the peoples who have suffered, and the peoples must be trusted.

If war is to go on indefinitely the peoples of the world must be put in a position to will it so. If more holocausts of the flower of the world's youth are imperative, they must not be made for secret and hidden purposes of

politicians, or at the bidding of old men who vociferously demand more sacrifices on an obscured issue.

The free peoples of the world are waking. They are finding sanity and are seeking truth. Armageddon has for ever discredited the systems and the politicians which made it possible, and never aga n will it be possible for inner circles and castes numbering at the most two hundred men to plunge two hundred millions into war.

Opinion must be free or truth perishes. Is truth so ignoble that it is unfit for the ears of the masses? Is peace so vile that the mention of its name is an abomination?

If truth and truth alone were spoken by the governments of all the belligerents, if truth and truth alone were printed for one day in all the newspapers of the world, peace would come within a week, and the sacrifice of youth by age would cease.

There is to-day the definite possibility of peace on a fundamental basis of "no annexations." And a peace on these terms would be a great victory for the British army, which, by its superb tenacity and sacrifice, held at bay the German millions and frustrated the aims of the Prussian autocracy. Such a peace would automatically call for a general disarmament, because militarism, having achieved nothing, would be discredited, and it would represent the complete victory of democracy for all time.

And when the moment is imminent for negotiations

there must be no political delays, because the millions in the trenches will still be suffering their hell. The soldier has done everything, the politicians nothing. He is looking anxiously for a ray of hope, and windy perorations nauseate and disgust him, and the day will come when he will express his opinion by his vote.

He is the man that counts, and to help him every man must fight unceasingly to welcome the dawn of sanity. For sanity brings truth, and with truth comes peace.

VII

SITTING ON THE SAFETY VALVE

27th October 1917.

In a mad world let us endeavour to preserve our sanity by retaining our sense of humour.

And but for the vital issues at stake one could only laugh at the desperate attempts of the reactionaries during the last few weeks to stamp out all opinion but their own.

In the barrage of mud which they have flung I have reason to believe that an insignificant portion has been directed to me. By which I am flattered if not disturbed. For only knaves and fools fear criticism.

And so I am going to reply.

I have been guilty of writing a series of war articles. They were written with the purest of motives and therefore must, of course, have appeared to certain political minds abstruse.

The articles were published in many of the leading newspapers; they received a wide publicity and created widespread interest.

The fourth of the series, "With Truth comes Peace," which appeared on 3rd August, was the first of the series to take a definite stand and demand from the Government a statement of Britain's war aims.

It stated the facts plainly, truthfully and independently, and called for the opinion of the public.

And the opinions I received staggered me. From all classes of society I received thousands of letters, some of them the most wonderful human documents I have ever read.

The response has been so overwhelming in support that I no longer hesitate to express my views when I have such wonderful proof that 99 per cent. of the nation is in agreement.

"With Truth comes Peace" was written immediately after the Reichstag Peace Resolution in July, a resolution which abandoned all claims to annexations and indemnities, and the political importance of which cannot possibly be exaggerated.

That resolution, let its significance and effect be minimised and distorted as you please, showed the awakening of the German people, the certain downfall of the Prussian autocracy's war aims, and the ultimate victory of democracy in Armageddon.

From the moment of the passing of the Reichstag resolution peace and the end of the world agony have been in sight, *if only the politicians in all countries can be forced to be clear and definite in the statements of aims.*

But since July political happenings only tend to show that the moment the bare possibility of an end appeared on the horizon, the politicians, the diplomats, the autocrats, the reactionaries and the controlled Press the world over combined their forces and concentrated their efforts to prohibit the very mention of the word "peace."

In Britain, in Germany, in France, in America—which is yet new to Armageddon and its emotions—an eleventh commandment has been added: "Thou shalt not discuss."

What on earth have the rulers to fear from a sane discussion of peace terms or war aims—or whatever you like to call the irreducible minimum the nation is prepared to accept on which the struggle and the holocaust may be ended?

Is it that they do not understand the new school of thought, of democracy which has been born out of the horror and the agony?

But sitting on safety valves is as stupid a sport as the trailing of red herrings, if a trifle more exciting.

And red herrings have been trailed in plenty. The propagandist Press is an expert in the gentle science.

In the fourth year of Armageddon, after blandly assuring us that we are face to face with a world shortage of every essential of life, it proceeds to devote columns upon columns to the activities of a comparatively insignificant and entirely dishonest mercenary bearing the illustrious name of Bolo, whose achievements would seem to have been by no means commensurate with his pay.

"The Adventure of Bolo" might make a good scenario for a "movie" picture or a "crook" drama, but is insufficient brain food for anxious, bloodstained, war-torn, heart-sick, struggling people.

Bolo, who, from his name alone, should have been a circus clown or a sword-swallower, took German money, a great deal of German money, it seems, and talked peace.

Therefore everyone who mentions a possible peace—*or attempts an elucidation of war aims*—is in German pay.

In the classic phrase: "It's so simple!"

As a matter of fact, this sort of stupidity is simply and solely the attempt on the part of the few to stifle all discussion, all criticism, all opinion and to overwhelm all who disagree with them and refuse to consider them and their doings sacrosanct with a deluge of mud.

And if that is their aim, if they are nervous of trusting or confiding in the people, let them at least drop the cant of the war being for democracy.

"The people of this country and of the whole Empire," declared General Smuts, "deserve to be taken into the confidence of their leaders."

I do not know whether, because I write the truth as I see it and as it is forced in upon me by daily experiences, because I happen to be perfectly sincere in the few ideals I have contrived to preserve, because in seeking to find an end to this appalling struggle my ruling motive is to champion the man in the trenches, who is enduring all, suffering all, and the very accidents of whose daily life have to be Bowdlerised for polite consumption—I do not know whether I have been "Bolo'd" and placed in the category of traitor.

But since certain reactionary papers have covertly

referred to my articles, and *The Morning Post* recently specifically and disparagingly alluded to them, without mentioning my name, I here and now publicly announce that if any newspaper or person dares to stigmatise me as pro-German, or to insinuate that I receive one farthing of remuneration from any organisation or person for the expression of my views, I will issue a writ for libel within twenty-four hours.

The propagandist mentality does not seem able to realise sincerity and purity of motive.

Since I am, in my commercial capacity, a large employer of labour, and contribute thousands of pounds a year in taxes, I demand the right, in common with the people of this nation, to discuss peace terms and war aims.

It may give cause for reflection to the very few who have criticised me—and some of them, I have no doubt, have done so quite honestly—if I state a few simple facts about my personal position in relation to these articles.

Throughout the war I have supported my country in what I conceived, and believe now, to be the sacred spirit of patriotism.

In September, 1914, I publicly advocated that all businesses dealing in military requirements should contribute a percentage on all their receipts for three months to the Prince of Wales' Fund. I regret to say the commercial firms did not fall over one another in their rush to adopt my scheme, but I individually contributed several hundreds of pounds.

These personal details are sordid, but would seem to be necessary.

Realising the stupendous task confronting us, and the grim necessity, I strongly and publicly advocated compulsory service long before the Government adopted it.

And I went further than any Chancellor of the Exchequer has dared to go.

I suggested a scheme for compulsory War Loan investment of 5 per cent. on small incomes and 10 per cent. on large ones.

And, incidentally—it is a purely personal matter and I apologise for obtruding it, but this is an age of personalities—I have financially helped every man in my employ who has joined the colours, and in some cases I am paying their full salaries.

Is this concretely—and not by windy verbosities—helping my country or not ?

So much for myself and my personal affairs. But is it not natural that I should feel nauseated at these rabid propagandist attempts to discredit any effort to arrive at an end to the world's nightmare, at a sane awakening, at these attempts to create a " coercive " atmosphere, at these methods of suppression ?

The chief mischief of the whole present situation lies in the fact that the Government, at the most critical moment in the nation's history, is hopelessly out of touch with the people. The prolonged strain may have blunted its perceptions, but

the fact remains that it is not only out of touch with, but in many vital instances is acting in direct opposition to, public opinion.

And speaking, as I am entitled to, on behalf of a great and powerful community of business men, *who are in entire agreement with Labour on this subject*, I warn the Government that the continued suppression of free and honest opinion on possible peace terms and war aims will only be submitted to with ever-increasing resentment and distrust, and will, infallibly, very soon lead to the gravest unrest and to a situation of chaos which will be fatal to the national interests in the present crisis.

The people of Britain have paid, are paying and will pay the price in blood and money, and their demand for the right to a voice, to a right to free and full discussion at this, the most vital moment of the war, will soon be too loud to be ignored.

General Smuts says : "We have won the war."

I agree with Smuts.

Prussian militarism has been balked and is for ever discredited. Even Prussia is awake to this.

And we have won the war economically. Let us not lose it socially or for psychological reasons.

Let us as victors state our war aims, the terms of peace we will accept and concede to the enemy.

And let the aims and the terms be the aims of and the terms of Democracy.

But, for the sake of all the blood and the lives we have

lost, the agonies that have been endured, the treasure we have expended, do not let us allow the tragedy of Armageddon to degenerate into a diplomatic dog-fight.

I defy criticism on any word I have written in any of my articles. They have no ulterior or discreditable motive and no political design or tendency. They represent the unadulterated truth, written fearlessly and patriotically in the highest sense, in that they are purely democratic. And I am fearless because the people of the world are with me.

I loathe secret diplomacy and I loathe secret politics, for obscurity of purpose is repugnant to my nature.

I love my country, and I want a better and cleaner world for my sons to live in than exists to-day.

If the ideals to which I have given expression and which I have endeavoured throughout to act up to are ignoble, then I have no more to say.

VIII

THE REIGN OF YOUTH

1st December 1917.

IT was the festive season, and as one of the older generation, suckled on the Dickens tradition, the Taxpayer had no shame. So he had accepted the invitation to the banquet and his poor lean nostrils twitched as he entered the Hall of Plenty.

Yet it was but a frugal meal which the Politicians had invited him to share—a mouthful of turtle soup, a sole, a baron of beef, a partridge or two, a little fruit, a very few nuts—that was all, for one must think of the war sometimes, and he was right glad to see champagne was drunk, owing to the terrible shortage of beer, and that, as a delicate compliment to the Dress Controller, who had only recently emphasised "old clothes" as a patriotic duty, the very oldest wines were ranged upon the table.

But as he gazed around his spirits fell.

The Politicians—pale, anæmic, ill-fed—bore visible traces of the three years and more of privation, hardship, toil, danger and suffering they had so valiantly borne. Nor were the signs of strain merely physical; as they reached their trembling fingers for their liqueur glasses they betrayed a state of nervous prostration which would have won the sympathy of even an unreformed Medical Board.

But this was no ordinary banquet. It was a crisis in the world's history, and the peoples of the world were waiting breathlessly for the messages which were to be delivered.

A hush fell, broken only by an occasional clatter of a saucer as coffee was handed or by an occasional scratch as a match was struck and applied to a Corona, and the speech began.

And here, I regret to say, the Taxpayer felt sleepy.

In vain he pinched himself; the old, old phrases fell upon his ears—" hornets," " rabbits," " little nation," " green valleys," " the Welsh mountains," " starry eyes," " bull-dogs never sheathing the sword," " tighter belts "—and as the dear old familiar phrases echoed through the old, old hall at last he fell asleep in downright earnest and slept the honest sleep of repletion.

But just as the scene slid from him he heard someone say angrily:

" *There is no hope of an early end to the war.*"

. . . .

Suddenly there was a touch upon his shoulder and he awoke with a start.

" Come," said a loud voice in his ears, " pull yourself together, man."

The Taxpayer looked up.

And then he became aware of the presence of a great, jolly giant, glorious to see, and with humour in his eyes, who held in his hand a terrible, glowing torch, and

the Taxpayer glanced fearfully round the banqueting-hall. The Politicians had gone. He was alone with this monster.

"Who are you?" he demanded nervously.

"I am the Genius of Youth," said the giant.

And then the Taxpayer covered his face in his hands and wept.

"But Youth is dead," he wailed.

"Touch my robe!" commanded the giant.

The Taxpayer did as he was told and held fast.

The huge banqueting-hall vanished and the giant and Taxpayer stood before a great temple.

"What is this?" asked the Taxpayer.

"This," said the giant, "is the House of Legislature."

"It is not in the least like the old House of Commons as I knew it," remarked the Taxpayer in a nervous attempt to be flippant. But the giant frowned.

"We have left the old things behind in our flight through the years," he said, "and this is the Age of Youth. Always remember, in the bygone centuries, when the old men ruled, there were some upon this land of Ours who laid claim to know Us and did their deeds of party, passion, pride, ill-will, bigotry and selfishness in Our name, who were as strange to Us and all our kith as if they had never lived. Remember that, and charge their doings upon them, not upon Us. Come."

And together they entered the temple.

. . . .

The Prime Minister, youthful, clear-eyed and virile, was speaking:

"In this righteous cause war may become necessary, and we propose at once to enforce the conscription. The old men are becoming garrulous and irritable, and the Government feel compelled to take drastic steps in order to maintain peace. We propose, therefore, to call to the colours at once all men of the age of forty-one and upwards. If we are compelled to face another Armageddon, let us not forget the lessons of that historic struggle of five centuries ago. The history text-books will tell you how the ruling of the nations was left to the aged; how for six years or more the old men of the world blundered on, thirsting for more and more blood, until the annihilation of the civilised earth seemed imminent; from year to year the rate of war casualties was increased, and the deaths of civilians killed from the air ran to millions; how for years tentative and indefinite peace terms were offered from every side, and each in turn dismissed as a 'trap,' because the old and sterile could not trust one another; how the psychological moment for peace never arrived until the Youth of the world was wellnigh exterminated; how damnably obstinate the old men were, and how grimly determined never to sheathe the sword—which they had never drawn."

And here there were loud cheers, during which the speaker paused gratefully for breath.

"Let us never forget the teachings of those dark pages of ancient history," he resumed. "Let us never forget

the dreadful state to which our country was reduced by the old men in the sixth year of that terrible war; how bureaucracy throve and flourished till not a hotel, not a club and scarcely a private house in this London of ours was left uncommandeered; how profiteering was rampant; how the National Debt rose to £15,000,000,000. Let us remember the condition of the civilian tax-payer, imprisoned for the faintest criticism of any old man or any bureaucratic underling. Citizens, if there *must* be war, let us at least remove one danger from our midst; let us place the old and irritable in the firing line. I ask the immediate call to the colours of all males over the age of forty-one. The times are too grave for us to run any risks."

"But they never allowed people to talk like that in my time," whispered the Taxpayer to the giant.

"This is the Age of Youth," said the giant sternly.

"But won't you explain things a little?" pleaded the Taxpayer as they left the Temple. "You see, I seem to have died, or passed away, in the fourth year of what they are talking about, so I never saw the end."

. . . .

"It came with the Revolution of Youth," said the giant solemnly. "Youth possessed both the intellect and the power. Youth *was* the Empire, and Age was decadent. Age was impotent, rapacious, incompetent, vicious and destructive. The old men quarrelled and goaded the young to fight. Age, by its negligence and by its stupidity, was responsible for that ancient Armageddon; Age was

intolerant and showed no signs of solving the problems of war. Age had told Youth that the war was for freedom, but freedom had vanished from the world; that the war was for democracy, but Age was not democratic; that the war was for posterity, but Youth *was* posterity, and stood in danger of extinction. So Youth decided that since Age had so decimated posterity, the privilege of fighting for posterity should be given to Age, and the Youth of the whole world realised quite suddenly that they were fighting for ancestry, and agreed at the first International Conference held during the first armistice that no belligerent should employ in arms any man under the age of forty-one. And that great tradition has for five centuries freed the world from war.

"Youth was very wise and very just. Youth decreed it a criminal offence for any newspaper to print any statement it would not guarantee as truth. And there was a great economy in paper. Bellicose writers and politicians and armies of bureaucrats and profit-mongers rushed to the colours, only to find the Army Service Corps was full.

"The Tribunal system was continued, with the difference that the Young sat in judgment on the old. Age appealed for exemption, but was rebuked. 'I have given my son,' pleaded Age. 'There must be equality of sacrifice,' said the chairman. 'Youth will now give its fathers and its grandfathers too, rather than allow autocracy to rule.'

"Armageddon as reconstructed by Youth into the actual battle of Age did not last a week. Youth was tolerant and

Youth was human. Youth desired life and not death, and the reign of Youth gave the world Peace."

. . . .

And at that very moment the clatter of an overturned coffee-pot woke the Taxpayer, just in time to catch the concluding words of an elderly politician's angry peroration :

" Therefore, so far as I can see, the struggle will be a lengthy one, *and there is no hope of an early end to the war.*"

IX

HOW TO GET PEACE BY ADVERTISING

March, 1918.

DEAR "NEWSPAPER DIRECTOR,"—When you asked me some few days ago to write you a short article on "How to get Peace by Advertising," you will remember that I told you I had months ago thought the matter out, and have come to the conclusion that it can be done—or, at anyrate, that the end of the war can be tremendously hastened—by the expenditure of an absolutely insignificant sum.

You smiled when I placed the minimum cost at £20,000 and the maximum at £100,000—the cost of twenty minutes' war to Britain—but then you became interested. Hence this little article.

My estimate may seem absurdly optimistic, but you must remember that I make two conditions before embarking on the scheme, and they are:

1. Freedom from censorship (which I should not abuse).
2. Access to the advertisement columns of the entire British Press, whatever their political, editorial or controlled views.

Granted these two essential conditions, now for the method I should adopt.

In order to prove that I am not talking vaguely and theoretically, I may recall to you that during 1917 I wrote and published a series of articles on the war; articles on the war situation as it actually appeared to the ordinary,

sane, moderately intelligent and patriotic British business man. The first three articles were critical, and correspondence began to pour in on me from all quarters, and *not one letter in a hundred was in disagreement with my views.*

I knew then that I was voicing the unspoken opinion of a vast majority of our countrymen.

I determined to take a definite stand, and on 3rd August the fourth of the series, "With Truth comes Peace," appeared in a wide range of papers, covering all types of educated readers, commencing with *The Daily Chronicle* and appearing subsequently in *The Manchester Guardian, The Globe, The Star, Town Topics, The Herald, The Cambridge Magazine* and others.

The article demanded from the Government a statement of Britain's war aims and, incidentally, anticipated practically the whole of the Wilson deductions. It stated the *facts* of the situation plainly, truthfully and independently, from the point of view af the ordinary man.

It was written immediately after the Reichstag Resolution, by which, as you know, the Reichstag formally recommended the abandonment of all claims to annexations and indemnities. That resolution, let its significance and immediate effect be distorted as you please, showed the awakening of the German people, to whom President Wilson has since appealed, and the certain ultimate downfall of the Prussian autocracy. For even if the Pan-German party are on top to-day, it will make no difference to the morrow.

My article strongly advocated a peace on the basis of no annexations and no indemnities, and I called for public opinion on the subject.

The response amazed me. I received immediately thousands of letters, and for over six months letters have continued to come in from all parts of the world.

I had, naturally, expected a certain amount of adverse criticism. Of the total number of letters I received there was again a majority of over a hundred to one in enthusiastic and determined support, whilst amongst over a thousand letters from the trenches only *one* was hostile.

These letters were illuminating.

I wrote to *The Daily Chronicle* and made the challenge that I would write another article on the same subject, consent to its publication in *any* great daily newspaper, with the same request for readers' opinions, and give £100 to the Red Cross if the response was not overwhelmingly in favour.

That experience had shown me how it would be possible to get peace by advertising.

The chief obstacles to peace are very few, but so far they have proved insuperable. They are the "secret" treaties we have read, the existence of the secret treaties we have *not* read and the Imperialistic aims of certain belligerents. When we realise that no nation is going to win this war, and that all nations must be infinitely the poorer by it, then and only then shall we realise that to obtain a clean and democratic peace each one of the belligerents must be

prepared to adopt the principle of conciliation and of sacrifice.

Propaganda, advertising—call it what you will—to succeed must be constructive, and the *constructive* way to obtain peace would be to get twelve of the best writers in this country together, who agree that the only really democratic solution of the world problem can be stated in ten words :

"No annexations; no indemnities; self-determination; general disarmament; League of Nations."

Each of these writers would be called upon to write a single column once a fortnight—not much to ask of them.

But those single columns must contain the best stuff they have ever turned out—must come from the writers' souls, reveal their inmost convictions.

Each article must be simple, human, appealing and always Truth—Truth—Truth!

Each day in all the great papers a different article would appear by a great writer, stating democracy's aims, and at the foot of each article would appear this request for public opinion :

"Do you agree to Peace on these terms? (Yes *or* No.)
Name..
Address....................................."

From my own experience I know what the response would be. On this vital question every citizen, every soldier,

every wife and every mother is waiting anxiously to place on record his or her opinion. And they have the right.

Then with these millions of names and addresses I would go to Downing Street and say: "*This* is public opinion. *This* is the will and these are the aims of the British nation."

No Government could stand against such an expression of opinion; it would be compelled to accept the *declared* views of the majority or resign.

I see that at last another idea of mine has been adopted, and a Director of Propaganda in enemy countries has been appointed.

What a weapon such a scheme of propaganda would place in his hands! It would be for him to bring it home in its utter simplicity to the peoples of each belligerent country—no insuperably difficult task, surely—and its adoption would depend on his capacity and should only be a matter of time.

We should then get the collective opinions of the peoples of the world.

And since this is, we are told, a war for freedom—free opinion freely expressed would at once decide the issue.

If the rulers of the world are sincere, the war could be ended in less time than it takes to contest a General Election and at less cost.

I am not altogether a dreamer, my dear "Newspaper Director."

Yours very sincerely,

H. DENNIS BRADLEY.

X

THE GENERATION MAGNIFICENT

An Open Letter to an Old Man

20th April 1918.

"Discredited as they are in practice, the cowardly proverbs hold their own in theory ; and it is another instance of the same spirit, that the opinions of old men about life have been accepted as final."—ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

VENERABLE SIR,—You will permit me, I trust, to call you venerable, for have you not all the signs about you that demand veneration—a moist eye, a dry hand, a yellow cheek, a white beard ? Is not your voice broken, your wind short and every part about you blasted with antiquity ? Are you not long past all military age, and do you not rule the world ?

And since you rule the world you are in a position to demand veneration, and you shall have it.

. . . .

Pardon me if I take it upon myself to lay the tribute of Youth at your feet, for Youth is no longer articulate—Youth may soon cease to exist—and it would be a tragedy that you should fade into your comfortable grave with no token of the gratitude of the Young.

Believe me, venerable sir, I address you in no insular spirit ; you are a cosmopolitan, an international ; you are peculiar to no nation, to no race ; you are just you ;

Imperial, proud and free, the World Compeller. Permit me, then, in the names of the Youth and the Middle Age of the World, to place on record ere we pass our appreciation of the superb spirit shown by you and your fellows, the Old Men of the World, during these years of Armageddon.

. . . .

In the hours of weakness, of hesitation and doubt, when the Youth—and the Middle Age—of the World began to dream, to wonder and to question, to ask if there was no solution to be found, no escape from the blood-bath, by conciliation, by negotiation, your wonderful war spirit, your grim determination to pursue the struggle to the deaths of others will stand eternally to your credit.

You never faltered, you never stayed to think, to count the cost; in the words of that grand and most perfect example of your type, Georges Clemenceau, that seventy-eight-year-old veteran in the lists of love and faction, you mumbled blithely: "I wage war."

The inspiration of your example, venerable sir and master, has had a profound effect on the younger men who are fighting the battles you made possible.

There are no slackers in your class.

That you should exercise a controlling interest in Armageddon is but natural, for is not Armageddon yours, O venerable cosmopolitan in your sixties and seventies? Is it not the result of your life-work, your ideals, your political theories and your social dreams?

That you permitted it to mature so slowly, to grow to such ripe perfection, that you had the patience to delay, to curb your appetite and wait until you were old ere you allowed the fruit to be gathered, redounds to your credit, but does not deprive you of the glories of ownership.

Yet there are flies in your ointment, and at times I fear you must turn uneasily in your comfortable bed.

. . . .

There are no doubt times when you " wage war," that you curse the misfortune of age which denies you the thrill and glory of the front-line trench, where you could defy the mud and the lice—for insects abhor the aged ; times when with Wilhelm Hohenzollern—one of you—you gaze a trifle sadly on the bright sword so proudly spoken of but never drawn by you except in metaphor. How you must wish that you could see real blood upon it of your very own letting, that you had, with your own right hand, stuck it in someone's stomach, heard him scream and seen him die.

Such joys are not for you, venerable sir ; but in the hours of your long labours, as you sit on your tribunal from ten to four, in the fetid atmospheres of the parliaments of the world, in the midst of your arduous toil, in your Bureau, in the sanctity of your Cabinet when you laboriously add fresh claws to clauses, you must occasionally sigh a little enviously as the old lust stirs faintly within you ; your pinched nostrils must twitch at the vague memories of that

fine salt smell of blood, which you are not privileged to smell, but only to shed by proxy.

Yes, you have your troubles. But then we are all impotent alike: Youth in one way, Age in another.

. . . .

But, venerable sir, if it is any comfort to you in your occasional Gethsemane, let me assure you that Youth stands speechless in the presence of your bravery and sacrifice, at your mad generosity in giving—stands mute before the reckless prodigality of aged generals—some of you—who in the comfortable if dull seclusion of their chateaux, as they fling millions of lives into the furnace, curse the hardness of their cushioned chairs and almost forget to take their medicine.

As warrior, as politician—and no one snarls more viciously than you in any and every way—you, venerable sir, are without rival.

In part, no doubt, in its acidity, this bent for warfare may be constitutional; indeed, physicians tell us that at certain periods of their lives the elderly are prone to strange whimsies; but much, no doubt, is due to the grand school of thought in which you were educated and in which you seek to educate Youth—and Middle Age.

At times, I fear, you must fret over the dullness of your pupils, their ineptitude may even disturb your rest, and your rheumy eyes may not be able to close. But what happiness was ever perfect?

Even We, venerable sir—again I speak for Youth—have Our secret sorrows.

In the course of nature, in another twenty years at most, there will be none of you left, and how are We to console ourselves for your loss?

. . . .

But We shall never forget you.

Your triumphs of civilisation, of world organisation, will long outlast your lives. And those of Us who are left will toil and sweat as We pay off that magnificent debt of thousands of millions and remember you and thank you and bless you for your splendid legacies and think gratefully of your encouragement to thrift. There is no littleness about you. No one will ever be able to call you paltry.

And if, as is the wont of the aged, the sterile and the physically infirm, you are still inclined to grumble peevishly at Our apparent ingratitude, at an imaginary falling short in Our meed of praise, remember things might have been worse, even for you.

. . . .

You might, for example, have seen the light in that South Sea Island where directly a man shows signs of decrepitude he is buried alive.

"The date is fixed, and on the appointed day, in front of a large crowd, the old man is led to his grave. He is then stretched out at full length, and whilst incantations are sung, the earth is thrown over him by willing hands, and he is left to die. The spectators then adjourn to a feast."

Think of the loss to this civilised, cultured, scientific Europe of Ours had you, venerable sir, been born in those barbarous climes where they kill the old and save the Young.

Thank God, venerable and gallant sir, that your lot has been cast in more venerable places, where the destinies of the Young are at the mercy of the magnificent old.

PART II

I: UNCENSORED IMPRESSIONS

To those of us whose souls were not yet deadened the year of 1918 was the most emotional of the war—one sensed and felt the breaking-point.

So many of the big ideas—bred of the mind anger at the ruthless conduct of a ghastly war—could only be expressed in tiny cameos.

These odd little "impressions" published during 1918 and 1919 skirted at times on sex—and perhaps were inspired by sex, which, after all, is the wilfulness to life.

War influences and intensifies and has always influenced and intensified the sex instinct more or less everywhere in every country. Fundamentally it may be the force of creation seeks to combat the force of destruction.

Hypocrisy I do not allow to exist in my nature. And if the war has released us from the hypocritical, so-called morality—smug in convention but corrupt in mind—which existed before the war, then perhaps in one phase at least this has been a war for freedom.

Therefore I make no apology for the way in which sex pulsates at odd moments in the latter part of this book. For when the life force is exterminated wars and even worlds end.

. . . .

The material effects of the war were disgusting. We were standard fed and standard bled. And how we thinkers

loathed the standardisation, to be classed in categories, treated as cattle. It was intolerable to the artist mind.

. . . .

Yet in one's public writings it was necessary still to write on the material facts of the war—on the artificial prosperity—on the living on paper—on the negligible money values—and to warn and forecast, as I did early in 1918, that material goods would eventually become the chief negotiable asset.

Two years afterwards the public and the politicians woke up to the fact and thought it was a new discovery.

The spendthrift bureaucracy in 1918 were more tyrannical than ever, but I continued my lonely but determined attacks upon them.

Always I rammed home the point that they would leave us to foot their bill.

I did not fear their self-annexed power, because, with the exception of one or two really clever subtle minds controlling behind the scenes, the rest were a mere collection of sycophantic fools, preying on the "rare and refreshing fruits" of war. This wretched gang I was capable of beating at any move they might have dared to make. And, needless to say, they showed no mighty daring.

And I used the halberd of satire to pierce their obese stomachs whenever I felt in the mood.

And if I needed confidence, always I knew the great public was behind me and applauding my attacks.

. . . .

RILETTE

Rilette's subtle monkey satire—which he called, *Were we to Blame?* depicting the appalled sense of responsibility the monkeys felt for being the guilty origin of a degraded civilisation—gave literary birth to the fantastic tragedy of "Mrs Hanuman's Indiscretion."

One had to laugh in one's rage sometimes. And the laughter—of the gods—became easier towards the end.

But laughter and rage vibrated through everything I wrote in 1918, and the rage was splendidly stimulated by the nausea I felt at the old men—the aged responsibles for the world's horror. And throughout I missed no opportunity of hitting and hurting them. I took a sardonic delight in kicking them relentlessly in "The Fool's Paradise," "Aren't the Old Men Splendid?" and "Mournful for Monkeys."

I detest the mal-mentality of old men so much that I have determined that in ten years' time from now, when I shall be fifty, I will play no part in public life, offer no advice to anyone and write nothing except in the very lightest of humours. Perhaps I have almost arrived at filminess at forty, for it is significant that the last "trifle" which appears in this book is "Lighter than Air."

. . . .

I have met more than one great comedian who has told me with genuine tears of disappointment that the one great aspiration of his life was to play a really tragic part.

Therefore, perhaps, circumstance forces many of us to

play a part in life which of our own accord we would not choose. And perhaps in writing circumstances force us to write on subjects degrading to our minds and in forms unnatural to our souls.

The idealist, the seeker of beauty, is trampled on by the world, and if he desires to exist is forced back to the comedy, or farce, of Life.

I feel that the most intense emotions are inexpressible in words. But if one feels deeply and can write—one is impelled to make the attempt.

I know the intensity of this desire when in September, 1918—two months before the Armistice—with a critical military position, yet divining inside myself the inevitable, imminent end of the world travail, I spent an exalted day in writing "When Victory Comes."

It was born of a mind praying for release from agonising pregnancy.

In form I tried to give the expression of a great emotion, beyond even war, the pulsating emotion of creation, something to be expressed from the inmost of one's self.

And in November the tortured were given their release.

. . . .

At about eleven o'clock, on the eleventh day of the eleventh month of 1918 the boom of the guns electrified the anxious, expectant city of London. For the first time for four and a half years—or was it an æon ?—the boom of the guns was a signal for Life and not for Death.

At that moment I was in theatreland, watching a young

girl dancing under the tuition of Elise Clerc. The dance was arrested dramatically by the first bang. "It's peace!" shrieked Madame Clerc, making the great discovery we had anticipated for days. And in her really splendid French exuberance she almost kissed me.

It was a wonderful day. I lunched with Life. And later I dined with "Jacques d'Or" at the St James' Palace Hotel, the only hotel in London where we could find a seat. We found a refuge from the boisterous streets where the atmosphere of dignified calmness prevailed precisely as it did in war-time and in pre-war-time, an atmosphere in which one felt that, were the building rocking with an earthquake, it would have been quietly suggested that "under the circumstances perhaps one's claret might be 'bucketed' instead of 'cradled.'"

. . . .

"What will you find to write about now the war is over?" asked a fatuous idiot a few days later.

"Ten thousand things of Life, if I can spare the golden moments of living it," I replied.

And the first thing I did was to write some aphorisms, a literary switch and a literary relief.

But although the war was dead, Dora was alive, and I felt it a personal duty to kick her in vital and unsavoury parts, whenever the mood took me. But the hide of a rhinoceros is a *soufflé chocolat* when compared with Dora's.

The indecent haste with which an election was thrust upon a war-weary nation immediately after the Armistice

is now history. It was as amusing as it was amazing. Nearly all elections are fought at a chosen, emotional opportunity and on false issues. This one was fought on "A New World," "A Home fit for Heroes to Live In," "Hang the Kaiser," "Make Germany Pay." Britain's bill alone was then £8,000,000,000, which on the rate of exchange at the moment of writing (April, 1920) means about £90,000,000,000. . . . These figures are very naughty, but then the war has been a tragedy of ridiculous naughts and pathetic crosses. . . . Such a figure is, of course, a mere flea-bite in these days of high prices, but, if it is worth mentioning, on paper, just about six times the entire wealth as estimated—still on paper—of the whole German nation.

I am not arguing the ethics of the case, I am merely giving published facts . . . if such a thing exists as a fact, published or unpublished.

However, the programme of promised prizes offered by the Government was so alluring that one might imagine we Britishers were about to enter a virgin Garden of Eden, with such an abundance of the fruits of victory that we should have enough to spare to choke the serpents with the surfeit.

Since then we have tasted a little of the fruits. Unfortunately, however, the fruits of the Income Tax have given most of us the gripes.

However, at the time of the December election I was able to amuse myself one Sunday by writing a little satire on the Ministers of Metaphors, which I called "Ideals and

Low Deals." Here I became atavistic, for it took the form of a playlet.

. . . .

Later in life, when I feel a temporary need to rest from living, I may write one or two plays. They will be plays on the fundamental emotions, not on politics. I do not wish to soil my hands dramatically with a dirty subject.

And when I write of Life and Love they will be shown in all their magnificent strength and in their tragic weaknesses. And I will tear to shreds the veil of hypocrisy surrounding and stifling them. Then once more, upon a different field, I shall join issue with my friend the Censor and match my morality against his. But I warn him I shall be subtle.

. . . .

Soon after the Armistice had been declared our mentality began to recover from the stupor of war. We were all tired of the drama and nauseated with tragedy. The mood naturally inclined towards the lighter things of Life.

That is why the later "fragments" in this book take a lighter switch in form and expression. A temperamental writer can only write according to his mood, and the dates on which these fragments were written are given in order to time the mood of each moment.

They become lighter and lighter towards the end, until the last words were written in January, 1920, and these I have termed "Lighter than Air."

And perhaps the wisest philosophy is contained therein.

" To keep one's mind fresh and clean it is necessary to change it at least as often as one changes one's underclothing."

This tiny aphorism—penned by me at midnight, with about twenty others, after an evening's companionship with Denis Mounie, 1865—sums up the whole of Life.

I should be bored to death living with the same mind—or the same anything—for ever. I do not think it sanitary.

If in my " Aphoristic Laughter " I appear to level my artillery at Woman, to assume that she desires that everything men do and achieve should be done " for her and her alone," let me console her by saying that I have not nearly arrived at the stage of sexual cynicism. . . . I am too young and virile. My sex philosophy is too catholic.

I know nothing of Woman. But I know as much as most men.

Therefore when I write on women I do so merely to irritate them delicately. And since Love is a delicate irritant, what more can I offer them ?

. . . .

These odd notes which I have written to introduce my published fragments of thought are not entirely flippant in spirit, though they may appear flippant in form.

If one can endure the fires of hell, one can revel in the joys of Life.

If one is understood by a few, one is fortunate. If one is understood by all—one is a fool.

II: THE AGE OF STANDARDS

February, 1918.

THE world having now practically ceased to produce, we are of necessity reduced not only to a standard ration, but the tendency is towards standardisation in all things.

A standard food ration may be an unpleasant necessity, but uniformity is the god of the moment, and in too many instances a healthy individuality is requested to bow before an entirely unhealthy and preposterous ogre of bureaucracy.

Let there be no mistake, standardisation is of itself retrogressive, not progressive.

But it is beloved of a certain kind of mind for its own sake, and if certain folk had their way we should soon lead standard lives with standard wives, be standard fed, and standard bled. We might even be enjoined to make standard love, but surely there is still enough of pride, of romance, even of snobbishness, caste prejudice, if you will, left to settle the standing of standard love.

III: PAPER AND WEALTH

March, 1918.

FINANCIALLY, Britain is living on paper—and there is a paper shortage.

Financially, Germany also is living on paper—and there being an acute wool shortage, she is not only living on it but in it, for already she is reduced to paper clothes.

The only real wealth to-day is in stock.

Coldly analysing the situation, the workers of the world have for four years practically ceased to produce, and their energies have been employed only to destroy. The natural outcome is a disastrous shortage of all raw materials.

Only the coward and the fool refuse to face fact. This shortage of raw material will become more and more grave. Money values will become negligible, and material will become the chief negotiable asset.

IV: THE BARNACLES OF TRADE

March, 1918.

Business men are more than a little weary of the steadily increasing battalions of the bureaucrats and their increasing interference with trade.

The methods are not constructive but obstructive.

The fatal objections to the bureaucrats are their ignorance and their inability to grasp the very elements of the system upon which a business can alone become a commercial success, and an asset to the country.

The leading English businesses are patriotic in the highest degree, and are conducting their trade under the greatest difficulty in the best interests of the nation. The revenue of the country—which is one of the chief sinews of war—depends on commerce and on the efforts of the country's business men.

Who has got to foot Britain's colossal war bill?

Yet business men are frequently at the mercy of some under-official whose business education and ability are a negligible quantity—possessed of autocratic powers and perfunctory manners, and who can, and does, dictate to them, at any time, how to run, or misrun, their concern.

V: A NIGHTMARE IN MUFTI

April, 1918.

BACK from the wars and in civil life once more, the civilian lay in his standard bed, pulled his rationed blanket over his head and tried to shut out the howlings of the unrationed wind.

Barely, it seemed, had he closed his eyes at curfew when the standard réveillé blew, and climbing hurriedly into his standard clothes he sought the standard communal kitchen for his rationed breakfast. He fumbled for his ration card, and was chilled to his rationed bones as he realised that he had lost it.

Dejectedly he wandered out into the coldest cold and reached the Embankment.

Economical as ever, he stripped off his standard suit and advanced to the edge of the parapet. For a space he stood there, his mind revolving busily, while the wind howled derision at his skinny nudity. Just as he was about to take the plunge a cold, rough hand held him.

"Your suicide card, please," demanded the official.

Wearily he turned to his discarded clothes—and found them gone—gone while his bony back was turned.

Rationless for a month! Clotheless for a year! Unable to live! Not permitted to die! He warmly sur-

rendered his shivering frame to the custody of the standard gaoler.

. . . .

The civilian awoke and smiled at the memory of his horrible dream, but as he placed his ration ticket in his pocket a thoughtful look came into his eyes.

VI: THE COST OF CURFEW

May, 1918.

THE Statistics Controller sat in his palatial bureau, stroked his beautiful grey beard, and thought and thought and thought.

Figures danced before his eyes, figures surged in his brain, wonderful, obliging, obedient.

Rising, he flung open his window and gazed over the Metropolis of the world.

Darkness, beloved by the old because their ugliness becomes unseen, was setting in over the great city, and even as he gazed the solemn peal of Curfew broke upon his ear.

He chuckled as he drew forth sheets of paper. "Not a flaw in the argument," he soliloquised, "not one flaw, for figures cannot lie. In half-an-hour the Official Tuckers Up will have completed their round; not a fire will burn in all London, not a light will glow, not a train will run, not a crumb will fall from the richest man's table; the saving in shoe leather alone will suffice to run the war for hours; clothes will wear longer, tobacco and alcohol will be saved in incalculable quantities, and the birds will get their sleep undisturbed. This is indeed a perfect economy. Every link holds."

A sardonic titter startled him, and turning in his chair he beheld his evil genius, the Spirit of Doubt.

VII: A TAXED LUXURY

June, 1918.

IN the dear, dead pre-war days beyond recall " looking ahead " was popularly esteemed to be one of the cardinal virtues.

It was associated with thrift, with sound commercial instinct, with the solid respectabilities of life as we knew it.

But " looking ahead " has now become a luxury which few can afford to indulge in, and has presumably ceased to be a virtue. More and more do we live from day to day, from hand to mouth.

But to indulge in luxury for one moment, it is not hard to look ahead and foresee the return of the simple, grand old days of barter and exchange.

Money is rapidly ceasing to mean anything, and if, as the sturdy pessimists have it, the war is to last for three or four years more, the man who wishes to obtain certain goods will have to deliver other goods in exchange.

In other words, you may have to pay for your theatre tickets with fresh eggs, travel on the surplus from your allotment, sacrifice your meat coupon for a glass of wine, pay your rates and taxes in home-bred rabbits, and as for your clothes——

Well, perhaps there won't be any clothes.

VIII: MRS HANUMAN'S INDISCRETION

July, 1918.

It was in an evil moment for his peace of mind that Huppah, the oldest monkey in the cage, slyly abstracted a piece of newspaper from a passing small boy.

It was for its possible contents that the old gentleman annexed the sheet, he had no itch for news.

But contents there were none, and finding time hang upon his hands he commenced to read the paper with that easy-going, tolerant contempt for the degenerate human which is so marked among the monkey-world intellectuals.

"Pho!" he remarked scornfully, "a nice mess our descendants have got themselves into! 'Grave Wool Shortage!' 'Black Outlook for the Future!' 'Possibility of No Clothes!' Serve them right, the bare, smooth-skin rascals. Precious ugly some of them will look to be sure." And he giggled to himself. "A nice sight that fat, bald-headed old human who tried to prod me with his stick this morning will make, with not a stitch or a hair to cover him, and not a spark of humour to warm him! 'No Wool': well, that doesn't affect us of the pure-bred stock," and he stroked his fur complacently.

Idly he commenced to tear the sheet into scraps of paper, and amused himself by watching them flutter to the floor of the cage.

"'Meat Shortage.' Bah! 'Further Reduction of

Spirits.' Pooh! 'Match Scarcity.' Pish! 'Possible Coal Famine.' Tush! Civilisation? Gosh! . . . Paradise Lost!! Whatever *are* the idiots on the other side of the cage doing?"

An item caught his eye that made him pause. "'Fight to the Last Man,'" he muttered, and became suddenly thoughtful. A worried look stole into his eyes and he called his aged wife, Jochebed, to his side.

"The last man," she repeated in amazement, when he had read the passage to her. "Huppah, what does it mean to *us*?"

"By the bones of Hanuman, father of all the monkeys," he growled, "it looks as though we shall have to begin all over again"—she gave a little squeak of flattered alarm—"but," he went on grimly, "let us at least take care the new Darwinian product is more intelligent than the last."

"But were we really to blame?"

"We were careless, my dear," he replied with immense decision.

"I have always thought Mrs Hanuman rather flighty," she murmured, woman-like.

"Something more than flighty, I fear, judging by results," corrected the old gentleman. "Poor Hanuman, he had his hands full. I always pitied him—almost as much as I pitied the *tertiumquid*. She led them both a pretty dance!"

Mrs Jochebed turned savagely on her spouse.

"That's right," she snapped acidly, "blame the female, *of course!*"

Huppah scratched his head, and then raised his voice imperiously. "In any case," he commanded, "*should* it be necessary to start all over again, see to it that the laws of simian eugenics are properly respected. Make it your sole aim to avoid the evolution of a degenerate race liable to fits of Armageddon."

And Jochebed, his wife, became right thoughtful.

IX: THE FOOLS' PARADISE

July, 1918.

BEING neither young nor old, and neither saint nor satyr, I incline to the view that I must be amongst the sane.

If war has achieved one thing, it has made the articulate few—and the inarticulate many—realise Life, Death and Love.

We live in a world in which the old men in every country presume to govern our wills, our lives, our longings and our belongings.

Their record is before us; youth they have duped, misled, insulted, preyed upon, cheated, used and lied to.

The old men have made no sacrifice, paid no price, except that of the cost to their feelings, as they grudgingly disgorge their excess profits. Their quaint boast, which has become a *cliché*, is that they have " given their sons'," lives which were not theirs to give. They have given much—too much, that was not theirs to give—and expect to receive too much in return for their carefully calculated munificence.

There is a world shortage of the sweet and pleasant things of life, thanks to the elderly profiteers.

But Youth, in its last refuge, hugs one consolation to its breast; the elderly profiteer meets his match, and something more than his match, in the Lists of Love.

For the Lists of Love are the Lists of Youth.

Age may desire, but Youth inevitably possesses. Love is not for the old, the sterile, the impotent.

And if, in their decadent imaginations, senile satyrs misread the enigmatic smiles of the nymphs, seek to profit by the absence of the well-beloved Youth; if they are so fond in their conceit as to misunderstand, to believe that the allurements are for them, let them know that they, in their turn, are being duped, misled, trapped, tricked, preyed upon, played upon, lied to, cheated, used—and loathed.

For, come what may, the weapons in woman's armoury must not be allowed to rust; must be kept sharp as her wits, and in the absence of lordlier game she practises scornfully on vermin.

Penelope wearily trifled with the suitors until the return of Ulysses. Not the glory of gems or gold could move her, nor had the sea a pearl so rich as Ulysses.

> "Oh, should Ulysses come again, how long,
> How long should strangers glut themselves at ease?
> Why, he would send a cry along the halls
> That with the roaring all the walls would rock,
> And the roof bleed, anticipating blood,
> With a hurrying of many ghosts to hell
> When he leapt amid them, when he flashed, when he cried,
> When he flew upon them, when he struck, when he stamped them dead!"

The saturnalia of the old men is nearing its end. It is well that they should see and know themselves; that the poison of their knowledge should consume them.

X: WHO LOVES THE BUREAUCRATS?

September, 1918.

I DO not love the bureaucracy. Sociably and sometimes unsociably I meet many people, interesting and uninteresting, passionate and cowlike, intelligent and unintelligent, idealists and high-dealists, literary men and journalists, artists and Royal Academicians, knock-outblowists in arm-chairs and reasonable men in muddy khaki, but I can find no one who does love the Bureaucracy —except the Bureaucrats, and even they do not love each other.

The Bureaucracy controls everything, except its own obsession to control, which is uncontrollable.

Now, although the Bureaucrats are mostly old men, it is remarkable that they contrive to increase like rabbits, and the Bureaucracy has now grown into a colossal army, unproductive, inefficient, uncreative, incompetent, destructive, and a stupendous charge on the country.

They are never constructive and always obstructive.

I have had it said to me on more than one occasion by high officials: "'They' do not care about businesses." Meaning, of course, that the Business Community was not to be considered, that it was regarded as an unessential nuisance, something to be held in contempt, to be bullied, dictated to, thwarted and crushed at will. But who is going to pay for the war?

Such a lack of system might endure for a short war, it cannot survive for over four years without a disastrous effect on the country.

The Business Community must no longer be content to live in the outer darkness, to be permitted to exist on sufferance as vulgar tax-payers.

It sounds ironical to suggest even another controller, but what we really need is a Bureaucrat Controller ; someone who would curb their appetite for illogical and unnecessary interference, someone who will inquire into what " They " are doing, and who will restrict and " comb out " these tired, worn-out, ignorant old men, and retire the majority of them to the peaceful asylums from which they came.

If we do not smash the unlimited power of the Bureaucracy, it will smash us.

XI: WHEN VICTORY COMES

September, 1918.

DAWN!

The birth of a new world.

The world of Youth.

A world in the birth throes of new and clean ideals born of the agony of years of bleeding and suffering.

The birth of Love.

After ages of pain.

When Victory comes, and the foul menace of militarism is swept aside!

When Youth, the fetters struck from his limbs, the bandage loosed from his eyes, no longer gagged, a slave, stretches his weary limbs, gazes at the man-mutilated earth, and lifts his eyes to the Sun.

When the tortured world grows once more glad.

When the sap rises, the buds burst into leaves, the blossoms open, and peaceful skies ring with ecstatic songs of mating birds.

When a veil of flame-like flowers and cool green grasses is cast over the scarred and blistered battle-fields. When children's laughter rings once more in ruined places and lovers make their tryst where Mars' grim harvest made its home.

When Victory Comes.

The Victory that Youth has fought for, bled and died for.

The Victory of Youth—Love.

. . . .

"Victory?"

And in the Council Chambers the shrill, triumphant squeals of the old men will issue forth: "It is our Victory! Look what we have gained!"

And Youth, fresh from the memories of the blood, the lice, the stench, the unspeakable filth, will listen with the smile of mockery to the sterile pipings of "Victory! Victory is ours!" from gnarled and skinny throats.

Youth who alone has paid the price and who alone will claim the Victory. Youth who has for years been stricken down, bound hand and foot, hemmed in, thwarted, tongue-tied. Youth who has wondered, questioned, fought and sought for some solution from the blood-bath. Youth who has gained the Victory and brought an end to the Sacrifice, to the Holocaust of the flower of the boyhood of the world.

Youth who has given everything, whilst Age, giving nothing, has monopolised all. And when these old men croak despairingly, "We have won the great Victory," they will be unheeded. Age has ruled in the past by Hate and the world is tired of Hate. Youth will rule in the future by Love. And Love is not for the old, the impotent, the sterile. The boastful cries from withered throats will be unheard, the senile pipings of Age drowned by the fierce pipings of Pan.

Victory means Peace, and Joy, and Life, and Love—a

world which seeks beauty and does not goad to deeds of hate.

And Youth, his limbs unshackled, no more a slave or subject to the tyranny of Age, his soul his own, is once more free and Lord of Life.

Then Victory comes.

. . . .

Victory!

And Love, crowned in roses, laughs aloud.

The rising sap, the mating birds, the bursting blossoms, the young things in the fields.

No longer has the grasping, envious hand of Age the power to tear the lover from his mate, to poison sacred wells of love with grinning Death, and spoil each passionate embrace with tortured fear that it may be the last; to crush the heart of woman with the dread her unborn child may never hold its father's hand.

When Love is born again.

After the ages of pain.

When Victory comes and Youth and Love can reign.

When Youth returns to the arms of the Belòved. Youth who is the Hope of the world—the Soul of the world. Youth who is Love and beautiful white thoughts.

When the long-craved hope is won. The wonderful hope, revelling in its own greatness. Wild, throbbing, absorbing, rising to a shout of joy. Intoxicated by its own power. Passionate! Overwhelming! Sweeping

aside convention, tradition, all that is old, all that has lived and is past.

The birth of a new world.

A world of Love.

Then Victory comes!

. . . .

XII: DORA THE STERILE

October, 1918.

DORA is my mistress. She controls my actions, my thoughts, my opinions, my mind, my stomach, my life. And although she shows no love for me, she compels me to go on living with her. As a mistress she is an anomaly, for Dora is a sour and sterile spinster, the only child Mrs Grundy ever permitted herself.

Now, although Dora bulges my pockets with innumerable permits to exist, although by curfew she sends me to bed at a time when I want to be up and doing, and although I am forced to approve of her dubious intimacy with her friend, the Censor, which is almost beyond the bounds of propriety, I really must ask her not to interfere with the running of my business. I know much more about it than she does, and in this, at least, I must be left unhenpecked.

I am not a weak character, but she has assumed the power to dominate me and keep me enchained so that I cannot be unfaithful to her. She is, however, a very expensive person to live with, and for her own sake she must give me sufficient rope to make enough money to provide for her—or to hang myself with.

Dora must keep her hands off the business community—they are paying and will have to pay for the war.

XIII: AREN'T THE OLD MEN SPLENDID!

October, 1918.

It is a cynical and unjust world. There is a grave danger that on the outbreak of peace ungrateful Youth may forget, in the stress and storms of victory, to pay tribute to the Old Men who have "carried on" so nobly during the interminable years of Armageddon.

Before it is too late, before their self-sacrifices are forgotten, before their little "bits" are ignored, before their rulings are overruled, before their public chatterings are drowned in the triumphant voices of returning Youth, let me pay homage to their elderly magnificence in war-time.

Let us never forget their wonderful fight to make the world safe for Bureaucracy.

In their splendour the Old Men, too, have suffered.

Let not their self-denial be forgotten.

Leaving their businesses, their professions, their asylums—even their pleasures—with shaking fingers they buckled on their gout boots and hobbled forth to do their Bureaucratic duty.

Even the elderly and non-combatant clergy rallied to the standard of War, with tottering but determined steps ascended the dais of the tribunals, and preached patriotism, self-sacrifice and self-denial to others.

Who cannot admire these ministers of a new and martial Christus?

Did the working poor need beer? The Old Men heroically limited their cravings to Veuve Clicquot. Was there little mutton in the land? Then these aged heroes turned nobly to caviare and game. Were there super-taxes and excess profits to be paid? Then their hearts—and prices—rose valiantly to the occasion.

Were the women lonely? Then again the Old Men bravely "carried on" and sought to offer consolation.

And their reward? Virtue by necessity?

Alas! it is not in this world that men—even old men—should ask for their reward.

Venerable gentlemen, I commiserate you. But I congratulate you on your spirit if not on your flesh.

And if ingratitude and disappointment be your lot, summon your domestic fortitude, your placid omniscience, your Victorian and vicarious philosophy, summon your optimism, and remember, as Jimmy Whistler never said: "Old age must come."

. . . .

Nevertheless I am sorry for you. My heart bleeds when I think of you creeping, shivering and naked, to bed, with only the thoughts of your sacrifices to warm your vitals.

Hold fast and stick it out, gallant hearts! It's a long tunnel through the Welsh mountains, but at the end of the steep gradient are green valleys and bad beer.

XIV: THE HYMNS AND ERRS OF LOVE

October, 1918.

AGES ago, in the first days of war, an elderly non-combatant Hun revealed his soul in some doggerel called *The Hymn of Hate*.

The venom of his spleen was too much for his digestion, and he spat it forth, to the immense pleasure of his kind and age.

His *Hymn* became famous, but even in the ghastly trenches Youth laughed at it and derided it.

Since that day, throughout the tortured world, literature, art and beauty, the clean and lovely things of life and love, have been cast aside and mocked at, while the old men in their love for their youth gleefully croak their hymns of hate, and will croak until death mercifully relieves us of their presence.

But Youth takes comfort in the certain knowledge that the universal nature, merciful but inexorable, silent but inevitable, will put a term to the tyranny to the Aged.

The day will come when there will be a shortage of Old Man Power.

Civilisation has collapsed as a result of rulings founded on Hate, dictated by the aged, the impotent, the sterile, the unwise. Youth will discard all the doctrines of its decadent fathers and build the new world on the foundations of Love.

And should elderly philosophers and cynics deem that the ruling of Youth by Love will lack in force, let us demand of them what they have achieved by the force of their rule of Hate.

Women loathe them.

The old and discredited generation who now rule the earth will be eternally damned by history as responsible for dragging a world of beauty to the depth of ugliness, ghastly in its uniformity.

By individuality the artist mind makes the world beautiful and achieves deathlessness.

Youth and Love are individual. By individuality Youth becomes great, by uniformity is made a clod.

The passion of Age is the weakness to hate ; the passion of Youth is the power of love.

Whatever we covet we strive to annex. But the cravings of Age are not the desires of Youth. The annexations of Age are sordid, of the earth. The annexations of Youth are beauty, love and the wonderful joys of life.

The Aged dream of annexing the earth, they whose proper annexation is but six feet of it ! The whole world awaits passionately its annexation by Youth, who knows no boundaries.

Joy is within ourselves and love finds its habitation only in the soul of Youth, where it can live in wonderful dreams, creating new and beautiful ideals.

In love's battles the wounds are borne with joy, because love is worth all pain and suffering.

"A JAZZ PEACE

And the battles are fought because love is catholic. Like the knight-errant of old, he wears his lady's favours on his casque, and now the favour is of the roses, now of the lilies, now of the passion-flowers and now of the silken rags of life.

But these lists are not for the Aged, for the adventurous soul is dead in them, and, barren of joy through rheumy eyes, they stare at the tournament of Love and seek to warm their palsied hands at the fires of Hate.

And Love laughs.

> "—fret till your proud heart break;
> Go, show your slaves how choleric you are
> And make your bondmen tremble. Must I budge?
> Must I observe you? Must I stand and crouch
> Under your testy humour? By the gods,
> You shall digest the venom of your spleen
> Though it do split you; for from this day forth
> I'll use you for my mirth, yea for my laughter
> When you are waspish."

. . . .

London will welcome the return of Youth. The West End restaurants are very ugly and on account of the young man shortage are filled with podgy bureaucrats with arrogant airs and vulgar profiteers with atrocious manners. Their obesity is suggestive of illicit meat coupons.

XV: LIMELIGHT

October, 1918.

It is a mad world. Let us—the elect—endeavour to preserve our sanity by retaining our sense of humour. We shall need it more than ever during the dark nights to come.

There is one subject uppermost in all our minds. I will confess that I am becoming so obsessed by it that I can hardly sleep at night, even now, when I am warm. (What insomnia has in store for me in the cold, long nights to come, when we go to bed at sunset in order to save coal, I dare not guess.) The problem is:

The Fuel and Lighting Regulations.

There will be a grave shortage of light.

Now the greater the strain of war, the greater the need of amusement. The fighting men have realised this. And as a lover of the drama—simply as one of the theatre-going and the theatre-loving public—I beg an answer to one question: *How are our favourite stars to be rationed for limelight?*

It would be too terrible if one turned into one's pet revue only to find one's favourite leading lady has been fined £100 for exceeding her limelight ration, with the appalling result that she was compelled to play for the rest of the run in twilight, or perhaps in a total "black-out." And think of the shock to Phyllis—"unwearied in war

work "—when she discovers that her *matinée* idol is a mere voice in the darkness. These *contretemps* must at all costs be guarded against. After four years of war we are susceptible to shocks.

But perhaps the light coupons will be transferable, and we shall see our idols sometimes, if only by the dim rays of a super's ration.

XVI: APHORISMS PERSONIFIED

November, 1918.

VULGARITY is the vogue. It is possible to vulgarise oneself on refinement, but it is preferable to refine oneself on vulgarity. And contracting a fashionable disease I am impelled to operate aphoristically.

. . . .

Truth has become a stranger. It is therefore almost as amusing to write the truth as to listen to a good lie. I lead an amusing life.

I occasionally converse truthfully, but it requires much explaining and—the day is so short.

. . . .

I am inundated with understanding. " Your views are splendid, but, of course, you will wind up in prison." So writes a soldier. " You must be a Christ-like character," writes another of my innumerable correspondents. But my intimates tell me they do not agree with either.

. . . .

I am neither Bolshevist nor Carmelite. I aspire to higher things.

. . . .

I relish the doubt whether the war will make the world safe for democracy, bureaucracy or shamrockcracy.

. . . .

My views on any subject can be stated in five words: "I disagree with most people." This is no proof of insanity.

. . . .

National ideals are not merely beautiful in conception; they are the subtlest argument to empower the conscription of liberty.

. . . .

War brings the most affluent emotions to inhuman nature. Should you doubt this, question the brewers and the bureaucrats.

. . . .

If one accepts Christianity heaven must now be overflowing with young men. Hell will fill up later when the old men die—naturally.

. . . .

Pessimists say: "The good die young." Optimists say: "The young die! Good!"

. . . .

When the profiteer is asked, "What did you do in the Great War, daddy?" he will be able to answer proudly, "I did well!"

. . . .

It is more logical for sterile spinsters to theorise on love than for childless men to dogmatise on the future of "our children."

. . . .

Old men in arm-chairs have little regard for veracity.

We hear them saying: "We have won the war." Why not "They"? Or is it an erroneous impression that the young men in the trenches had something to do with it?

. . . .

I do not really like commercialism, but I appreciate caviare and a Rolls-Royce. And so I am commercial—occasionally.

. . . .

My only objection to business is that it interferes with pleasure.

. . . .

Wisdom is negative unless it enables one to appreciate the joy of foolishness.

. . . .

Unless handicapped by education, it is not really difficult to become a millionaire if one is unscrupulous, but it impairs the mental and physical digestion.

XVII: DORA, THE DAUGHTER OF DARKNESS

November, 1918.

Now this is the true and terrible story of Dora.

On the outbreak of war Mrs Grundy, that strange product of a Victorian semi-civilisation, unfortunately for this island of ours, determined to do her "bit."

For a little time she cast about to find a purely proper outlet for her activities—as you know, war has a curiously exciting effect on some feminine natures—and after sitting at the feet of a celibate bishop or two chose her *métier* and coldly attempted a solution of the man-power problem of the future.

Mrs Grundy married the Censor, and in record time Dora, their only child, saw the light—which she speedily lost.

Dora developed rapidly; from the first she was a phenomenal infant. In fact, like a certain mythological person, of her it may be said that she sprang into the world fully equipped. At the age of one she was a nuisance, at the age of two a danger, at the age of three a tyrant, at the age of four a bore, and now, in the fifth year of her existence, she has degenerated into a sour and sterile spinster, all but blind, semi-deaf and acrid-tongued. There is nothing strange in all this, for, as you know, ill weeds grow apace, and in some climates and surroundings children develop at an abnormal rate, and are old and withered at an age when

children born in healthier circumstances are yet on the threshold of youth.

And, unfortunately, Dora has inherited all the vices of her bigoted mother and her dull father.

Not only is she bigoted and dull, but she is sour and mulish; she is deaf and blind to the actualities and the needs of life; her intolerance and unreason have passed into a proverb; her egotism is a bad joke, and hers is the cattishness and temperamentality of a disappointed spinster.

There is but one thing to be thankful for—she is the only child Mrs Grundy ever permitted herself.

I am sure no modern mother will ever again name her child "Dora," and no poet, no novelist, no dramatist ever condemn his heroine to such a name.

Dora was the leading character in that popular play *Diplomacy*.

Dora is the leading character in the modern parody on Diplomacy, although diplomacy is certainly not to be found in the character of Dora.

XVIII: THE LAST ABDICATION

November, 1918

I HAD a dream—a wonderful, joyful dream . . . a dream within a dream.

I dreamed that I awoke with a curious feeling of lightness, of liberty, of freedom; such liberty and freedom as I had not known during the Great War or the great peace. My soul was at rest, and full of divine content I strolled leisurely through the bureaucratic area of London, lazily enjoying the sunshine.

Life seemed suddenly so pleasant, so easy, so untrammelled.

And then I noticed with a fierce pang of joy that the windows of the Bureaucrats' stately homes were shattered, that stray cats dozed comfortably in the chairs where the Bureaucrats had dozed before, and that a charming air of neglect and desertion lay over all these former hives of bustling tyranny.

I consulted a comfortable-looking policeman, and his stare of supreme surprise made me realise the waking emotions of Rip Van Winkle.

"Haven't you heard?" he asked in amaze; "the last of the bureaucrats abdicated six months ago."

. . . .

He was a particularly mean-looking beggar, and his professional whine annoyed me; it clashed so horribly

with the azure sky and the golden sunshine. It was not, however, a day to be ungenerous.

"But what did you do in the Great War?" I broke in sternly, cutting short his banal fictions. A venomous gleam shone from his eyes, and for a moment he looked like a baffled and unclean snake.

"I sat there," he snarled, waving a grimy hand in the direction of the shattered palaces. "Throughout the war I sat there, issuing orders which none dared disobey. For years, with the beautiful Dora at my beck and call, seducing me to fresh excesses, I lolled at ease in great arm-chairs. My corny toes trod gaily on priceless Persian carpets, great Coronas kissed my withered lips, young and wondrous wenches worshipped in hundreds at my court. I was monarch of all I surveyed. My control was uncontrollable. Kind sir, I was 'It,' even amongst the Bureaucrats!"

Criminal reminiscences always interested me.

"And what was the end?" I asked.

"They forced me to abdicate!" he cried, his voice rising to an indignant shriek. "They wouldn't even grant me an armistice. They made me surrender unconditionally. The very people whom I had done so well flung me out into the cold, dark world to start life afresh!"

"Is that all they did?" I inquired sceptically, and his eyes fell.

"They branded me with an O.B.E.," he mumbled with bitter irony, "gave me a standard suit, and told me to

earn my own living—I, who have never worked. It is a bitter world, kind sir."

My pity fell asleep.

"Nemesis is just," I observed gratefully, and prepared to resume my way. Then he descended to sordid essentials.

"Kind sir," he pleaded, "although I have been used to champagne—I've seen better days in war-time, kind sir—I—I—I could do with a pint of beer to drink your health in. My condition is one of gravity."

"There was no gravity in beer in your time," I replied mendaciously. "I am sorry you must thirst on, for only this morning I gave my last blank cheque to the income-tax collector."

And then, to make use once more of the venerable joke at whose age even Aristophanes sneered, I woke up.

XIX: THE HOUSE OF HYPOCRITES

December, 1918.

IT has often been my lot in this prosaic world to shatter fond illusions and dispel great hopes, and once more, forced by cruel circumstances, I am compelled to make a painful announcement:

I am not going to stand for Parliament.

When this fateful decision was made known I was inundated with regrets from my acquaintances and congratulations from my friends. The loss to the multitude is again in the joyous relief of the few.

My reasons may be briefly, bluntly and brutally stated. I need but little sleep. I am aware that the House of Commons would be more conducive to this than any other place, but, unfortunately, it is impossible to overlook the fact that those afflicted with intelligence must get to work to pay for the war. Most of my hours will be spent in meeting the demands of colossal taxation, as many as I can afford will be devoted to discovering joy in life, and any that happen to be left at the end of my perfect day I shall really have to spend in bed—occasionally.

XX: IDEALS AND LOW DEALS

An Unpleasant Scene in One Act

December, 1918.

PLACE.—*Sanctum of the ASYLUM OF JOBS.*

PERIOD.—*Pantomime and New Coalition Season.*

The PRIME MINISTER *is seated in dignity. In private life he answers to the name of* RIGHT HON. HUMPTY DUMPTY. *He alone knows that he has won the war, and he is going to break it gently to the nation. His pre-war policy was ninepence for fourpence, but nobody knows who got the ninepence. Rare and refreshing fruit is on the table, but it is slightly over-ripe. A few leeks add to the atmosphere of the apartment. It is* 11.59, *and although there is no shoddy near the marble clock, it is preparing to strike. The ruffled locks of the* PRIME MINISTER *denote his anticipation and abhorrence of strikes. To the right and left of him are metaphors, and to save time he allows the breeze from the open window to mix them.*

As the curtain rises, in the distance a hunting refrain is heard, to which these words are sung:

Humpty Dumpty sat on opinions,
Humpty Dumpty dropped on his minions.
All the Press stunting and all the Law's men
Couldn't put Humpty together again.

In the open doorway stands Mr Coupon. *He looks exhausted, for he has been waiting an interminable time. His spirit is meek and his hat is in his hand. He is an obese person with a full-blooded complexion and an anæmic mind. He has a sycophantic manner, and an unaccountable thirst for a parliamentary career. His political aspirations are elastic in principle, so he approaches the interview with confidence. There is an expression of smug satisfaction on his face, having at last gained admittance to the Presence.*

Dumpty *is a hustler in method and the interview is as electric in its switches as the Albert Hall.*

Humpty D. How long have you been waiting on the mat ?

Mr Coup. Five hours !

Humpty D. How long have you been fishing for a job ?

Mr Coup. Five years.

Humpty D. Caught anything ?

Mr Coup. Nothing !

Humpty D. Come inside.

[*He enters.*]

Humpty D. What's your name ?

Mr Coup. Mr Coupon.

Humpty D. So did M'Kenna.

Mr Coup. Please, Mr Dumpty, I want to stand for Parliament.

Humpty D. What for ?

MR COUP. Anything I can pick up.

HUMPTY D. You'll find a long queue waiting for the pickings.

[*The clock strikes, and* HUMPTY *starts and mutters angrily :*
"Why wasn't I told ?"]

MR COUP. Everything comes to him who waits.

HUMPTY D. Don't you believe it. Wait and see.

MR COUP. I am seeing you and it's been some wait, Mr Dumpty.

HUMPTY D. What are your views ?

MR COUP. Long visions in Welsh tunnels ! Otherwise no opinion of my own to speak of.

HUMPTY D. Qualifications ?

MR COUP. I'm a decent member of rational society.

HUMPTY D. Cut that ! The House of Commons is a rationed society. Any convictions ?

MR COUP. No, sir. I've kept fairly straight and managed to avoid that.

HUMPTY D. You don't follow me. By convictions, I mean principles.

MR COUP. Oh no, Mr Dumpty, I can't afford principles. Convictions so often follow principles.

HUMPTY D. If I give you a Parliamentary Permit you must take one oath. I'll have no carping criticism this time. I said this was a war for freedom and I mean to be free.

MR COUP. I'll swear to swallow anything you like to dictate, Mr Dumpty. What's the oath, sir ?

HUMPTY D. You must swear to "Love, honour and obey me." In some cases I have to cut out the love and the honour, but not with you.

MR COUP. I take the oath, sir. What is my programme?

HUMPTY D. "Humpty Dumpty! The Man who won the War!"

MR COUP. I didn't know that, sir. So many people seem to have won the war. All those posters, you know— "Complete Victory! Yes, if you eat Less Bread," "Buy War Bonds and Win the War," "Keep the home fires burning low, and British Coal will Win the War." And then, what about Foch, Haig, Petain, Clemenceau and Wilson? And the six or seven million soldiers and sailors?

HUMPTY D. If that's the way you're going to talk you'd better clear out. That's neither diplomatic or coalishitic.

MR COUP. I'm sorry, sir. Of course, I quite forgot that most of the fighting men won't be able to vote. Rather rough that, sir?

HUMPTY D. Well, I don't know. Splendid fellows— "Starry eyes over the top" sort of thing—but they've had so much to do. I'm not quite sure whether they've had time to see the way I won the war.

MR COUP. How did you win the war, Mr Dumpty?

HUMPTY D. Go and see the great film, "The Man Who Saved the Empire."

MR COUP. I will, indeed, sir. I've seen Robey, the man who saved the Alhambra.

HUMPTY D. Who's Robey ?

MR COUP. Another George, sir, and just as funny. . . . What shall I say, Mr Dumpty, when I am asked whether I am in favour of the immediate repeal of Dora ?

HUMPTY D. Tell them it shall be repealed on the signing of Peace.

MR COUP. When might that be allowed, sir ?

HUMPTY D. I can't say. I've had many good times in Paris. And we must keep the vulgar trippers out of the Majestic.

MR COUP. Won't you rather miss Dora ?

HUMPTY D. Well, I've kept Dora now for four and a half years, and after the Paris trip—keep it dark—I am going to bring in Dopa.

MR COUP. Doper, sir ?

HUMPTY D. The Defence of the Peace Act.

MR COUP. What ! More dope, sir ?

HUMPTY D. In comparison Dora will be a dainty debutante. I shall endeavour to keep Dopa for the duration of peace.

MR COUP. And the only way to get rid of Dopa will be to go to war again.

HUMPTY D. And then I shall be the Man who won the Peace.

MR COUP. What about Conscription ?

HUMPTY D. I am totally opposed to Conscription. It is against all the traditions of freedom of the British people, and, of course, there are still the Magna Charta and

Habeas Corpus, you know. But I propose, in defence of the peace, to bring in a Bill for Compulsory Volunteering which will provide for two years' compulsory voluntary military training.

MR COUP. What is a Compulsory Volunteer, sir?

HUMPTY D. Ask the Ministry of National Service.

MR COUP. What about Wilson's fourteen points?

HUMPTY D. Splendid fellow, Wilson, but a little abbreviated. Why only fourteen? I can think of a hundred and fourteen.

MR COUP. What about Ireland?

HUMPTY D. Difficult problem, Ireland. Besides, I think we have got as many small nations to free as we can manage. We can't think of everything.

MR COUP. What about Russia?

HUMPTY D. Russia! Grave situation. Barbarous people, many of them, I'm afraid. We must occupy Russia—must free them. Must free some big nations, of course.

MR COUP. What about demobilisation?

HUMPTY D. Long job that. We must occupy Germany. Barbarous people Germans, but I suppose we shall have to stay there and free them. This is a war for freedom.

MR COUP. What about the Opposition?

HUMPTY D. I'm afraid there are many barbarous people in England too. We must comb them out. Liberal Party? They're a wash-out, so we needn't comb them out. We've singed their wings. Labour Party? I'm

afraid I've brushed them up the wrong way. But we must cut their talons. All people are barbarous who do not agree with me. In fact, when I get back there will be so much cutting and combing and singeing to do that after the wash and brush-up the Cabinet will be like a barber's shop. Here's your permit. I'll write an official letter saying I love you. And now you know your programme.

MR COUP (*excitedly*). I do! I do! Support the Barbers' Government. Vote for "The Man Who Shaved the Empire."

[*The curtain falls, and so does* HUMPTY.]

XXI: GOING UP

February, 1919.

It is now conceivable to the ordinary intelligence that the war is really over, even though the politicians say "the war is not over." But the mercurial temperament is weary of politicians—who have achieved so much . . . for politics. The mood of to-day is for lighter things.

We are tired of drama, nauseated with tragedy, and yearn for the comedy and phantasy of life. The world wants to dance again.

Every man one meets in this West End of ours has one question and one desire: "Where shall we dine?" . . . "Where shall we dance?" For years he has faced death, now he claims the right to face life. "To hell with curfew!" expresses his sentiments. And having had *his* days of hell, it is certainly curfew's turn now.

And having done the job and won the war, it would be splendid if we could welcome him back and offer him the privilege of a quite good dinner at, say, seven shillings and sixpence, a bottle of Pommery (1906) at sixteen shillings and sixpence and a Corona at half-a-crown. But Pommery is forty-two shillings, and the prices of all things are in the air, and are always "going up."

XXII: JAZZING

May, 1919.

PEACE !
And plenty—
Of Manchurian meat
And miscarried mutton
And mournful mobs
Of struggling serfs
Storming the Tube
And besieging the bus
Or begging for beer
In plutocrats' pubs
And feeding on fruits of victory.

. . . . .

And a very new world
Of parvenu peers
And bung baronets
And niggardly knights,
Whose honours were won
On the fields of finance,
And proud profiteers,
Fed fat by the war,
Now prey on the peace
By filching the fruits of victory.

. . . . .

All this is, of course, merely jazzing with the millennium.

It is written in a spirit of mischievous merriment, which might not appear unbecoming in these serious days of peace.

It should not be mistaken as another example of the exuberant decadence of Youth.

While the splendid old men so wisely settle the destinies of the world, Youth should hold its breath—and purse. And Middle Age its sides—with Dionysian laughter.

Age feebly fiddles while Youth brilliantly burns.

XXIII: ACADEMY IMPRESSIONS

June, 1919.

I HAVE no sympathy with the pose of Chelsea, which affects to treat the Academy as a matter for laughter, nor am I in accord with Balham, which takes its annual pilgrimage to Piccadilly in a spirit of devout reverence.

For myself, I enter the gloomy portals of Burlington House in fear; am I not about to see my fellow-men, the men of my generation, as posterity will see them, stripped of all contemporaneous glamour?

Hundreds of years hence, perhaps, a certain portrait will appear in some historic collection with some other title, such as "Typical Briton of the Armageddon Age (*circa* 1920). Note Frock Coat and Cigar of Period," therefore I gaze upon the presentment with respect and awe, and wonder what on earth Anno Domini 2019 will have to say of our age and its trappings.

But in trying to form a judgment of our age the inquiring citizen of 2019 will be severely handicapped. From the portraits before him he will come to the conclusion that the Britain of to-day was chiefly populated by ugly old men wearing ugly and shapeless clothes.

The art magazines of the future will probably reproduce them under new titles:

"David in one of Goliath's Misfits." "Impressions of a Typical Elderly Chairman of a Tribunal for Military

Exemption. Note Warlike Attire and Malignant Expression." "Study of a Dark Suit of the Dark Age."

The best-dressed room is the Sculpture Room, where Nature and Art are permitted to collaborate.

. . . .

It is a needlessly ugly age, and before Dora departs for ever she might do worse than forbid the perpetuation of the ugliness of ugly old men in their ugly old clothes. We have no right to offend the artistic senses of posterity.

XXIV: MAN, WOMAN AND EXCESS

July, 1919.

MAN is a curious animal.

Woman is an angel with curiosity.

A platitude and a tribute.

Men accept platitudes without question. Women question all things, even while they accept them.

I find it refreshing to deal in an occasional platitude . . . and hold a playful post-mortem.

The ordinary man loves a platitude with about as much intelligence as he loves a woman.

And once having accepted a platitude the ordinary man takes it to his bosom and he believes in it with a religiosity beyond his comprehension.

But, alas! platitudes, with many other things he takes to his bosom, are occasionally as false as they are fair and often blind his sober judgment and bear him wildly astray.

And nations and men deserve the government they get, in politics . . . and in love.

Only the few deserve the fair.

The ordinary man is worthy of the falsity of government, but unworthy of the falsity of more beautiful things.

. . . .

"What's in a name?"

Shakespeare perpetrated this fair and false platitude and the ordinary man took it to his heart and cherished it.

But the bureaucrats and rulers are subtler. They realise the stupidity of the ordinary man. They know that to him *everything* is in a name.

Therefore it was their humour to call the "Tax on Trade and Enterprise" the "Excess Profit Tax."

But the Excess Profit Tax is killing development and is the cause of unemployment. And the thirst of the Bureaucracy is insatiable and its orgies of extravagance so insensate that the poor tax-payer can no longer afford to meet the bills.

So he gives it all up because development is no use. The golden goose is dead. And the simple business man will be as idle as the subtle brigands . . . if not so subtle.

XXV: APHORISTIC LAUGHTER

August, 1919.

For years I have suffered from the affliction of telling the truth. Convalescence is pleasant.

. . . .

In some matters men are always babies. This accounts for the belief in the maternal instinct.

. . . .

I am not inclined to believe that *every* woman is at heart a—deceiver. She only thinks that every other woman is.

. . . .

It is not necessary to be a statistician to disagree that men are less virtuous than women. It is a simple matter of mathematics.

. . . .

Woman is seldom insular in her curiosity. She is catholic in most things.

. . . .

A man must be very adventurous to tell the truth. To tell the truth a woman must be very plain—thus she has no necessity for falsity, and makes a virtue of necessity.

. . . .

A charming young person recently told me that she disagreed with all my ideas. But she was careful to leave me no alternatives. Antagonism is intoxicating.

. . . .

Idealism is a splendid emotion for solitude. To share is to dispel illusion.

. . . .

Most women expect the earth. Why do they not realise the fortune of an occasional fragment of heaven?

. . . .

Women are perfect actresses. So it is natural they should love the theatre, where they are amused by the unnatural misrepresentations of themselves.

. . . .

The average musical comedy is an unmusical tragedy of stupidity and cupidity.

. . . .

Profiteering is now a necessary vice. One must profiteer to pay the other profiteers and meet the Income Tax collector without a blush.

. . . .

Old men are either fools or cynics. I have not met many cynics.

. . . .

If the fatuous old men only knew what the flatteress really thinks of them, the churches would be fuller—of old men.

XXVI: A STUDY IN IMPERTINENCE

September, 1919.

For a time sheer impudence is amusing, then it becomes tiresome, even vulgar.

And the Government has become vulgar. "Economise! Economise!" it impudently cries, and every bureaucrat chuckles under his breath.

"Produce! Produce!" shrills the bureaucratic chorus, "in order that we may enjoy rare and refreshing fruits."

"You are only providing us with a niggardly two and a half millions a day, and an ideal bureaucracy cannot be run in style on less than four and a half millions."

"It is a shell-shocked world!" scolds the Minister of Metaphors. "It is a *shell-out*-shocked world!" retorts the indignant tax-payer.

. . . .

It is, of course, obvious, even to the intelligence of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that the workers must keep the drones. The unproductive can only thrive at the expense of the productive. Hence the advice to you to work and save. Bureaucrats are expensive animals to keep.

In commercial and business circles, if a man earns £5000 a year and spends £10,000 he is coarsely dubbed a thief, and eventually pays the penalty of obtaining money

by false pretences. But your bureaucrat, in precisely similar position, talks of patriotism and duty and censors criticism by bleating vaguely of Bolshevism.

It is rapidly becoming the duty of the patriotic citizen to live in demobilised hutments and live on rationed nuts. Should he at any time feel bored he may feed on the thoughts of the bureaucratic hotels, caviare and champagne.

. . . .

The revolt will probably come when the Income Tax is nineteen shillings and sevenpence in the pound, leaving the tax-payer the odd fivepence, with which to purchase a banana—the fruit of the Stranded.

Then new tribunals will be established, composed entirely of producers. They will demand answers on oath to simple questions: " Are you constructive of anything but restrictions ? " " Do you produce anything politically but mixed metaphors ? " " Are you an asset or a liability ? " " If a liability, whom are you doing ? "

If found a liability, the wretched being should be conscripted at once for productive purposes, and the vision of a corpulent bureaucrat enriching the fields with more or less honest sweat would add to the much-needed gaiety of the nation.

. . . .

It is so dull to be always right. One loses the charm of the uncertainty of life. Sad to relate, over two years ago I was guilty of this forecast:

Evening Standard, *April*, 1917 :—" *At the present moment it is not too much to say that every business man stands aghast at a bureaucracy conducting the business of the country in a manner which would bring any ordinary commercial enterprise to bankruptcy within a week.*"

The long series of articles I wrote on the financial position were unheeded except by the few who called me unpatriotic or pro-German.

Life even in war-time is occasionally amusing.

XXVII: MOURNFUL FOR MONKEYS

November, 1919.

My playful philosophies are never remarkable for tolerance towards old men. And, being true to my generation, I censure the futilities of Age as pungently as I shall criticise the follies of Youth when I grow old, if ever.

This is one of the joys of being Irish.

. . . .

We are perpetually threatened with a new world, although, comparatively, early 1914 wasn't a bad one. To add to the joys of our butterless peace, it is claimed by Doctor Veronoff that the grafting of the interstitial gland of a monkey on an old man will bring back his exhausted force and lost youth and restore his physical and moral vigour.

. . . .

The experiments have proved wonderful. A decrepit ram, equal in age to a man of seventy, underwent rejuvenation and pranced about with youthful joy. Deprived of the grafted glands, the ram returned to its senile condition, which was, of course, rather rough on the ram.

The possibilities are boundless.

. . . .

It will be inspiring to see our Cabinet ministers on a spring morning gaily tangoing down Downing Street and ecstatically humming amorous love songs. And when they break their pledges we shall deprive them of their

monkey glands and let them return to their previously unpleasant condition—which was the fate of the poor ram.

. . . .

And when the Old Men start their next glorious war Youth will conscript all monkeys. Then the newly glanded old shall have the privilege to be the first to prance gaily "over the top" with starry eyes. Let us hope there will be no monkey shortage.

Another experiment of Dr Veronoff was the grafting of the thyroid gland taken from a monkey to an idiot boy. Two years later he joined the army. Oh, Mars, was this a proof of sanity?

From the scientific point of view the discovery is absorbing. I shall welcome the physical rejuvenation of our old men, even though their monkeyfied mentality of necessity remains unchanged.

XXVIII: FOR HER AND HER ALONE

November, 1919.

THIS affliction of telling the truth will be the death of me—when I grow old and ugly. But it really is a fascinating adventure.

It is rather a shame to spoil the beautiful peace and political loud laughter, but the future is really ominous.

Heaven knows I am not a pessimist, but omens are omens, and I fear the defeat of man, not by wars, but by women.

Ominous in khaki, for years our splendid women have stalked our streets—and favourite hotels—shouldering the world aside with militaristic intolerance. And now, when the fair Bellona condescends to flimsy mufti, her full intents are revealed—to say nothing of other revelations. Daily her deeds of derring-do fill our papers—and our divorce courts.

. . . .

The aim of woman is the complete subjugation, physical and financial, of the male.

Man must not be allowed to develop beyond his elemental functions as provider and fertiliser. It is for him to be drab and sombre and ruthlessly to economise, in order that woman may annex the limelight, the colour and the gaiety.

And the aged, the futile and the unfertile rush sycophantically to Bellona's aid.

"Let the young men of to-day be manly! Coloured clothes and shapely cuts are not for our stern and truculent sex," cries the elderly and corpulent traitor to his sex, stroking his stimulated stomach and smacking his lascivious lips.

. . . .

And woman subtly laughs! And so——

Let woman, lovely, altruistic, timid, shrinking woman, array herself in thousand-guinea sables.

For her let the osprey be stripped of his breast feathers!

Let the unborn lamb lose its astrakhan and the bird of paradise its tail!

Let the misanthropic oyster be deprived of its one ewe-pearl!

For her let the diamond seekers sweat and toil till their tongues are parched and their eyes bloodshot!

Let the jazz band strive in frenzy!

Let the *chefs* concoct wonderful dishes!

Let the vines ripen!

For her and her alone!

. . . .

"Hell!" said the duchess. "Let the young man remember that it is for him to provide and to pay, not to vie."

"So, let him economise and wear sensible, shapeless, Victorian clothes. A coat of unobtrusive drab and a

serviceable umbrella are his natural portion—all else is decadent and effeminate in a male."

And one vast twitter of applause arises from the myriads of female throats.

. . . .

Man must stand for at least an equality of the sexes.

He must fight against this insidious Pussyfoot propaganda.

Hideously outnumbered as he is, man has his rights. Imagine for one moment the scornful fury of even a small-part revue actress adjured to wear for her nightly jazz the ludicrous lingerie and lachrymose clothes of the darkest Victorian age.

It is only on rare occasions I scratch back at the primitive sex, and when this appears perhaps I may lunch alone for a while.

XXIX: LIGHTER THAN AIR

January, 1920.

If we could always permit ourselves never to be serious it would be a beautiful world.

. . . .

To express laughter is tedious, but when a woman laughs it is an expressive "He! He!"

. . . .

Is it possible for the mind to become too clever? Perhaps! But, then, one can always lose it. And only the few deserve the joy of madness.

. . . .

In a mixed *tête-à-tête* it is a fascinating occupation to separate the chaff from the wit.

. . . .

A pretty person, who failed to excite in me any physical appeal, was complimentary and called me a "buffoon." She was right! I did not make love, so, of course, to her I was a "buffoon."

. . . .

The emotion of a fat fool is merely a voluptuous vomit.

. . . .

Politically, I incline to the belief that England is suffering from fatty degeneration of the art.

. . . .

They told us the war was a war for freedom. Poor freedom! Freedom must have lost.

I do not tell the truth simply because of the love of it, but my fighting spirit cannot resist the magnificent challenge.

. . . .

Why value applause? The bawls of the multitude are the mere expression of tragic impotence.

. . . .

The world is over-populated with dead minds.

. . . .

It is better to have loved and won than never to have two and lost.

. . . .

One has to learn to love a few or become an anchorite and fend oneself. Am I unselfish or ambitious?

. . . .

The beauty of my virtuous emotion towards some women amazes me, until I analyse the virtue of desire.

. . . .

I live in a sublime state of unsettled subtlety. (Curse these alliterations, I can't keep away from them. But they breed themselves naturally. I do not manufacture.)

. . . .

My correspondents are legion. "Your style is so singular," writes one. "I like your square talk," says another. But both are wrong, for I sometimes write in the circular plural.

. . . .

A woman wears a halo when she cannot wear beautiful clothes.

. . . .

Some of us are born light, some achieve lightness and some have ethereal things thrust upon them.

. . . .

"To argue with you is useless," said an irritated charmer to me one day. "It is like water on a duck's back." She lacked the grace to say that it was like champagne on a bird of paradise's tail.

. . . .

If one leads a devil of a life one must at least have the courtesy to give Satan a warm handshake in the whereafter.

. . . .

To keep one's mind fresh and clean, it is necessary to change it at least as often as one changes one's under-clothing.

. . . .

It is possible that a woman can fool all men some of the time; it is probable she can fool some men all the time; but she would only acknowledge to her intimates that she can fool all men all the time. ("Hell!" said the duke.)

. . . .

Only supermen are strong enough to bear the truth. The sensitive soul of woman does not aspire to Herculean occupation.

. . . .

When one is completely triumphant in truth, one will achieve as a reward . . . a splendid isolation.